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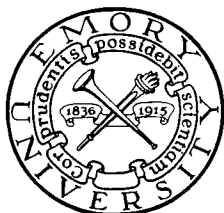
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LONG BEARD:

OR,

THE REVOLT OF THE SAXONS.

A Romance.

BY

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Made by some other deity than nature,
That shapes man better;—and they follow him.

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PREFACE.

THE story of "LONGBEARD," as detailed in the following pages, was first published in the year 1841, and was received with much favour by the critics of that time. It has been revised, and in some places abridged, by the author, but remains in other respects essentially the same. "LONGBEARD" is one of the men to whom partial history has done injustice. The few notices that occur in the early annalists are, for the most part, unfriendly; but it is so difficult to reconcile the events which they record with the opinions which they pass upon him; the purity of his life—the excellence of his motives—and the favour both of king and people which was lavished upon him; with the condemnation which these self-contradictory historians pass upon his conduct—that the author of this romance ventures to express his belief that in his framework of fiction he has approached nearer to the true character of the man than the historians, who wrote of him in the warmth of prejudice, and whose statements have since been copied by others without investigation. It has been objected to the present romance that the final catastrophe is not as recorded in the old annals, and that the author should have

hanged his hero. The author, however, begs to differ from his critics in this respect, and to adhere to his own version of the story, not only because there is a doubt upon the subject, and because in a case of doubt the man to be hanged is entitled to the benefit of it, but because no other catastrophe than that in the romance would meet the poetical justice of the case. The author believes as firmly as he can believe in a fiction that Little Red Riding Hood was not finally devoured by the wolf, but was delivered from its fangs by some beneficent agency at the very nick of time. He believes, in the same manner, that "LONGBEARD," equally innocent, escaped the fate to which the old historians have doomed him.

April, 1850.

LONG BEARD.

CHAPTER I.

“Now wat ye wha I met yestreen
Comin’ down the street, my jo’,
My mistress in her tartan screen,
Fu’ bonnie, braw and sweet, my joe.”

ALLAN RAMSAY.

BEFORE the departure of king Richard the First to gather glory in Palestine, under the banners of the cross, he conferred many favours upon the city of London. He confirmed the charters granted by William the Conqueror, Henry the First, and Henry the Second; and bestowed upon the burghers many immunities which they never enjoyed before. But the satisfaction attendant upon the advantages thus acquired was confined to the higher classes of citizens. Among the artizans and populace a fierce unquiet spirit was abroad. A century had not been sufficient to cool down the insolence of the conquering Normans, or to make the Saxons forget the freedom which their forefathers had enjoyed. The most wealthy of the burgesses of London, if not of Norman lineage, affected to be so. The populace on the contrary gloried in their Saxon origin; and between the two races there existed but little good will.

The great body of the people had but a very confused idea of either rights or duties: but, if knowledge had taught them nothing, the laws of instinct and self-preservation had taught them at least to resist oppression when it became too strong for endurance. Bands of overbearing and armed Normans thought it no shame to enter the houses of the Saxons, and plunder and insult the inmates. Instances are recorded of their breaking into hostelries for the mere love of mischief, and washing their horses’ hoofs with the ale and mead of the Saxon occupants. They often scattered the corn of the industrious husbandman upon the highways, beating, and in

some instances murdering, the unfortunate wight who had courage enough to resist them. The peaceable Henry the First, swayed by the counsels of his good queen Matilda, had endeavoured to restrain this terrible licentiousness. He had decreed severe punishments against the offenders, subjecting them to the loss of their hands or eyes, or to still more degrading mutilations. But the difficulty of obtaining redress was too great, and the Saxon population occasionally took the law into their own hands. The two succeeding monarchs effected but little in the way of improvement. Civil wars left Stephen but few opportunities, and religious squabbles employed the time of Henry II. Richard endeavoured to promote a better understanding between the two races, but the chivalrous mania of the age called him away to the Holy Land, and the only agent left to agglomerate the Normans and Saxons into one homogeneous and friendly nation, was that slow agent, Time.

At the period of the commencement of this history, Richard was a prisoner in Germany—undiscovered even by his faithful Blondel. His kingdom during his absence was divided and distracted. The nobles were attached to the captive monarch, and the burgesses of the large towns, having much to thank him for, were anxious for his return. But the Saxon population had no benefits for which to be grateful. They writhed under the insolence of his countrymen, and lent a ready ear to the suggestions of ambitious leaders, who flattered the Saxon at the expense of the Norman. John Earl of Moreton, the king's brother, strove to profit by the jealousies of the Saxon people, to transfer the crown to his own head. He intrigued with several of the Saxon chiefs for that object, and encouraged the disturbances which broke out in London, and which had well nigh convulsed the whole realm. The two great grievances of which the Saxons at this time complained, were the poll tax, called the tallage, and the severity of the forest laws,—the former pressing more particularly upon the dwellers in towns, and the latter upon the rural population. John appears to have encouraged the discontented in their opposition to these grievances, with a view of profiting by them to supplant his brother. London was peculiarly discontented, and was divided into two great factions,—the burghers and rich Normans on the one hand, and the Saxons and artizans on the other. The conflicts of the parties, and the crisis to which they led, will appear from the progress of this narrative.

In the year 1192, Smithfield was used as it is now, as a market for live cattle, but it was out of the town. Our

ancestors were not so foolish as to establish such a nuisance in the heart of their city. It was a large open space, with a few wooden houses and shops at the city side. The middle was in some places grass-grown, and at others a mere swamp. At the period of the commencement of our tale, two young women were passing through this space: it was a fine day in February,—one of those days which by their extraordinary warmth and loveliness give a foretaste of the coming spring. All the shopkeepers had exhibited their finest wares to catch the gaze of the numerous passengers who were drawn out of doors by the beauty of the weather. Near the middle of the enclosure several peasant-women from Kent and Essex were disposing of their butter and eggs, whilst others were dispensing oaten cakes and meat to such as were willing to purchase. Not far from them a quack-doctor had taken up his position on a cask, and was expatiating in glowing terms to the mob who surrounded him on the wonderful efficacy of the various nostrums contained in his basket. This man was dressed in the garb of an Asiatic, but some artificial dye or other, and not the sun of the east, had given his cheeks their dusky colour. A fictitious beard hung down to his waist. The most credulous of his listeners were rapidly getting rid of their loose cash, receiving in exchange his pretended remedies for colds and fevers, or charms against witchcraft and the toothache. Others, again, who possessed more wit and less cash, were amusing themselves by passing their jokes upon the personal appearance of the doctor, who certainly was a man well calculated to inspire others with wit, if he possessed none himself.

The two young women, who by their dress seemed to be the daughters of some respectable artizan, stopped before the barrel on which the charlatan was standing, and the youngest—a fair-haired, bright-eyed, cherry-cheeked damsel—appeared inclined to listen to his harangue, or perhaps to expend a piece of silver upon some love charm. They were attended by an elderly serving woman, who gazed on the wonderful man with open mouth. The doctor, seeing her gaping with all the outward appearances of deep credulity, began to run over with extreme volubility the list of his incomparable nostrums, which not only cured and prevented all the diseases and calamities incident to human nature, but also those which afflicted cats, dogs, parrots, and other favourites of women who have nothing else to bestow their affections on. The serving-woman was in that situation. The doctor saw it at a glance. He had not expatiated long, before she put her hand into a pouch which hung by her side, and laid out the full

moiety of her scanty store in the purchase of two remedies : one for her own rheumatism, and the other for the asthma which afflicted an overfed dog, which she had made her prime favourite. The fair-haired maiden, already alluded to, was about to invest a small sum in the doctor's wares, when she noticed that a young man, dressed in the first style of the Norman fashion of the day, had fixed his eyes upon them, and was earnestly watching their every movement.

"Come away, Friedolinda," said the youngest girl to her companion ; "here is that insufferable Norman again. The coxcomb stares as if he would eat thee."

"Let us go," said Friedolinda ; "this persecution is intolerable."

The Norman noticed their movements, and immediately pressed through the crowd to their side. His hair was cropped in the Norman fashion, and his purple hose of the finest workmanship, his richly adorned vest, and ivory hilted sword, showed him to be an exquisite of the first water. He was a handsome man, of one or two and thirty, and the self-satisfied expression of his countenance seemed to indicate that he knew it. The sisters endeavoured to avoid him, and Friedolinda drew down her veil to hide her countenance from his too earnest gaze. He, however, entertained too high an opinion of himself, and too low an opinion of womankind in general, to take the hint. He thought that no woman could be otherwise than flattered by any attention which he might bestow upon her ; and he pressed still closer to Friedolinda, in spite of the frowns of her sister.

"Why conceal thy sweet face, my fair creature?" said he ; "charms such as thine should not be hidden under a cloud. They were intended for the whole world—to see—and to admire."

"Leave us in peace," said the girl, "and carry your compliments where they will be more welcome. Leave us, if you are a gentleman."

"I would be no gentleman if I did," said the Norman, complacently. "Leave so much beauty alone, to be buffeted about in a crowd ! I cannot do it."

"I prithee go thy ways, thou van coxcomb," said the younger, with a pretty pertness, which was far from offending the Norman. "When we want admiration, we will seek it of a man, and not of a monkey."

"So sharp, too?" said the Norman, "and as fair as thy sister. Afore God ! it would be a sin were we to part until I made thy better acquaintance."

"Why don't you leave the women alone?" cried a rough

voice from the crowd, and at the same time a strong burly-looking fellow, in a workman's dress, stepped forward, and stared the Norman full in the face.

"If I had my whip with me," said the young Norman, "I would teach thee to speak more respectfully to thy betters, thou saucy caitiff!"

"And if I had my cudgel," replied the man, "I would batter thy hide, thou pert jackanapes!"

"Here's a cudgel for thee!" said another voice from the crowd, "'twere great pity that the Norman dog should not taste it!"

A stout knotty stick was here handed to the first speaker, and he was apparently about to execute his threat of cudgelling the young Norman, when the latter, who, despite of his flimsy and foppish appearance, was by no means deficient in courage, suddenly closed upon him, wrenched the weapon from his grasp, and belaboured him so severely that he fell to the ground covered with blood. The crowd, thinking that the man was killed, set up a loud yell of "Down with the Norman hound!" and dispatched sundry missiles at his head. The Norman, seeing the unpleasant turn that matters were likely to take, thought, as he was but one among so many, that his wisest plan would be to make his escape as speedily as possible. The crowd, however, were disposed for a riot, and to them a Norman, especially an overbearing one, was always fair game. Several of the most quarrelsome of the populace surrounded him, and, hustling against him, effectually prevented his retreat. The quack doctor was now left to himself, and the crowd from all parts of Smithfield pressed round the spot to see what was the matter. Friedolinda and her sister endeavoured to make their way from the scene, but the crowd became so dense that they found it utterly impossible to pierce it. The doctor seeing their embarrassment, kindly took up his station alongside of them, to give them all the assistance in his power, leaving his drugs in the care of his apprentice. The Norman, who had attempted to draw his sword, was disarmed in an instant by the mob, amid cries of "To the puddle with him!" "Slit his ears!" and others equally menacing. The first suggestion, however, seemed to take the fancy of the majority, and the cry of, "To the puddle with him!" was repeated from a thousand mouths. The sisters were hurried, or rather carried forward, by the riotous masses, to a large swamp or puddle on the northern side of the area. This pond was plentifully strewn with the putrid carcasses of dead cats and dogs, and it was resolved by the mob that this should be the scene of the Norman's punish-

ment. Thitherward, accordingly, he was borne on the shoulders of some of the most lusty of them. His jaunty cap had been torn from his head, and his fine garments were hanging in tatters about his limbs. By this time the authorities had been apprised of the riot, and some detachments of the city watch had been dispatched to the spot. They just arrived in time to see the unlucky wight soused into the feculent mire, among the 'disjecta membra' of the cats and dogs whose place of sepulture it was. The mob appeared to be satisfied with this punishment, and gradually dispersed, while the watch released the discomfited Norman, covered with filth, and more dead than alive.

CHAPTER II.

"Neither your birth, sir, nor your wealth
 Shall privilege this riot. See whom you have drawn
 To be spectators of it. Can you imagine
 It can stand with the credit of my daughters
 To be the argument of your sword? I' the street, too.
 MASSINGER'S *City Madam*.

THERE was in London at this time a wealthy tanner, named Jordan, whose house was the resort of all the disaffected among the Saxon population. Jordan was the most influential man of his class, and was looked up to with great respect by his own fellows, and regarded, also, with much consideration by the classes immediately above him. He was a man whose enmity was to be dreaded, but whose friendship, where he once bestowed it, might be reckoned upon while his life lasted. To him came all the discontented to detail their grievances. He was a virulent hater of oppression, and any real wrong inflicted upon his compeers made his eyes glisten and his blood boil; but he was not suspicious. Injustice must have been made most plainly evident ere he would believe it. He was too frank and open-hearted to imagine evil, but when he was once convinced of it, no man was more ready to resent it. Firm and uncompromising, his opinion was always sought in doubtful cases by his companions, and very generally acted upon by them. He was a man of about sixty years of age, with a large round face, full of good nature, and no small degree of intelligence. His forehead was high and bald, but without a wrinkle, and his hair, of a sandy hue, hung sparsely over his temples.

It was the evening of the day the occurrences of which

were detailed in the preceding chapter, Jordan was sitting in his comfortable arm-chair, before a wood fire, which burned brightly on the hearth. His brawny arms, naked to the elbow, reposed upon his lap. His eyes were closed, and an occasional snore indicated that he was dozing in the heat. At his side a large hound had extended his limbs, and had put his nose within a comfortable proximity of the warmth, while his eye, which opened every now and then, indicated that his slumber was not so deep as his master's. Whenever any noise unusually loud was heard in the street, the animal raised its head and listened for awhile, and when it subsided, lay down again to slumber. Over the fire hung, in gipsy fashion, an iron pot, and round the walls of the apartment were suspended a couple of cross-bars, a hatchet, and other warlike instruments, intended more for use than ornament, but which for the moment served the latter purpose.

At the other side of the fire, directly opposite to the tanner, sat a young woman engaged in needlework. Her age appeared to be about twenty. Her luxuriant black tresses were parted simply over her high forehead, around which she wore a string of beads of amber, the only piece of finery in her attire. When she lifted her eyes from her work she cast them for an instant upon the sleeper. Her eyes were of a deep blue, full of tenderness, and gave to her face a very remarkable but far from uninteresting expression. Her light eyes, and the dark hair, so seldom seen together, looked singularly beautiful. She was dressed in a kirtle of blue, over a petticoat of grey; and on the rudely carved and unpolished table before her was laid, what in those days was an extraordinary article for a person in her sphere of life—a book. Every now and then she laid aside her work to turn over its leaves, evidently with great pleasure, although when thus engaged she would steal a furtive glance at her father, for in that relationship stood the tanner towards her, as if she were afraid that he should discover her in such an occupation. She became at length so interested in its contents that she forgot the precaution, and the sleeper awoke and found her busily reading.

“Ah!” said the tanner, shaking his head, dubiously, “again with thy book, Friedolinda? If thy future husband encourages thee in it, on his own head be it—I wash my hands of it.”

“Nay, father,” said Friedolinda, with a good-natured smile, “there is no harm in it. I will teach thee, and thou shalt see how innocent it is.”

“The saints forbid! I have something better to do. But

come here, thou baggage, Bertha says that everything in the house has gone wrong since that book came into it."

"Poor Bertha!" said the maiden, with a sweet smile, half of mirth and half of pity.

"Ah, well," said her father, "put it up just now—I don't altogether like it. 'Tis not a fit occupation for a poor man's daughter. If William Fitzosbert allows it, when thou art his wife, that's another matter."

"But it was he who taught me," said Friedolinda, smiling.

"The more fool he!" exclaimed the Saxon.

Friedolinda gently resigned herself to her father's caprice, and putting the little manuscript in her bosom, sat down again to the wheel from which she had arisen. At that moment the door opened, and a maiden, two or three years younger than Friedolinda, tripped lightly along the floor, and imprinted a kiss on the broad smooth forehead of the tanner. The old man smiled, and clasped his favourite daughter, the pet and darling of his age, round the waist, and shading back with his hand the rich locks of her hair, looked on her face for awhile, and then kissed her.

The reader may have already recognised the two heroines of the morning's adventure, and the innocent causes of the mishap which befel the gay Norman in Smithfield. They were in truth, Friedolinda and Marian Jordan, without exception the most beautiful of all the girls of London. Marian was the general favourite, and her smiles were courted by all the gallants of the city, and her hand by at least half a dozen. Her hair was of a luxuriant flaxen colour, her skin delicately clear and white, her eyes of a languishing blue, and her whole face habitually lighted up by a joyous expression. Laughter continually peered forth from the corners of her red lips, which, slightly opened, exposed to view two rows of the whitest and most regular teeth in the world. It would have been wonderful if one so beautiful, both in face and form, as she was, should have been ignorant of her charms. But she was so simple, and so good-tempered, and so free from all affectation, that, although a coquette, no one would have imagined it. Even if they knew it, Marian was so sweet a flirt, it was impossible to be angry with her. And her beauty was only equalled by her wit. The envious, it is true, said that her wit was nothing more than petulance; but whatever it was, it became her so well that those who were most exposed to it, loved her the most. The other sister was of a more staid and serious character, full of sense and enthusiasm, and with a mind cultivated far beyond her station. Perhaps she inspired more respect than love. There was something

about her which induced folly, awed by her presence, to strive to appear wise, and which hushed the voice of empty noise and frivolity whenever she was near.

Marian, having saluted her father, drew a low stool close to the fire, and began to pat the dog playfully on the head.

"I think we must part with Odin," said her father. "As ye seem not to be able to walk the streets in safety, we had better get a good savage bull-dog to protect you."

"To worry the little Norman dogs that wont let us alone," replied Marian; "but Odin will do that, wilt thou not, Odin?" she added, patting the animal on his head, which looked up and wagged its tail, as if it understood her.

"It was said, that that poor gentleman was almost killed this morning," said Friedolinda. "I hope it is not true. Hast thou been to inquire, Marian?"

"Oh no—not I," said Marian: "I have sent our friend the doctor."

"I know not how it is," said Friedolinda, lifting her eyes from the wheel, and looking earnestly at her father, "but that Norman meets me wherever I go. He haunts me like an evil spirit—his eyes are always fixed upon me. He stares at me in a way that affronts and vexes me—I dread to walk abroad lest I should meet him."

"The coxcomb!" said her father, "an' I catch him, I'll—but no, I wont. His sousing this morning in the kennel will probably cool his passion. He will avoid thee now, as the devil does holy water—take my word for it."

At this instant a knocking was heard at the door, and the dog sprang suddenly from the ground, and began to bark in the most furious manner. It was evidently a knock with which he was not familiar.

The tanner took up a log of wood as if he would hurl it at the animal's head. The dog, however, knew that his master would not hurt him, and continued to bark with increasing violence, as the door slowly opening, the solemn figure of the quack-doctor walked into the apartment.

"This is the learned leech, father," said Friedolinda, "who so kindly led us through the crowd this morning, and who, at our request, has been through the city to inquire as to the fate of the Norman."

"What's thy name, friend?" said the tanner, shaking him by the hand, and giving him one of those vice-like squeezes which warm-hearted people often employ, to the terror of men of softer mould and tenderer fingers; "I like to know the names of those who have done service to me or mine."

"Abra Ben Acadabra," said the quack, with great solemnity.

"Then Abra Ben Baccadabra,—an odd name thine,—thou art right welcome to the house of Jordan the tanner. Sit thee down,—and Marian, fetch me some ale."

Marian disappeared to execute the command. The doctor took off his mantle, and, seating himself by the crackling fire, began to pat the head of the dog, which still kept up an ominous growl, as if not at all reconciled to the outlandish appearance of the stranger. By degrees, however, the caresses of the new comer soothed him; and, after having risen upright, and looked the doctor attentively in the face, he laid himself down beside the fire, with his open eye turned continually upon him.

"A good dog," said the doctor, "and I think one that would know me again."

"Ay, ay," said the tanner, "he's a true English hound—none of your Norman blood in him. He's rough, but honest. Art thou not, Odin?"

The dog wagged his tail.

"The gallant is not hurt," said the doctor, turning to Friedolinda; "he has come off with the loss of his fine clothes, a wetting, and the degradation."

"And who is the fellow?" said the tanner; "one that can be horsewhipped?"

"Not easily," replied the doctor; "he is a man of good family, great wealth, and, what is more, a man of note."

"So much the better," said the tanner; "his drubbing will be a finer example for his fellows."

"His name is Sir William Le Boutelier—a knight as brave as a lion—well beloved by our captive King Richard, by whose side he fought in Holy Land."

"The fiend seize him! I'll put his mettle to the test, an' he leave not my daughters alone. By heavens, I'll let the wind into his empty head!" said the tanner.

"He will most likely trouble us no more," said Friedolinda.

"Has he not followed thee for months?"

"He has, but his mishap of to-day will teach him wisdom."

"And for fear Wisdom do not, *I* will," said the tanner. "There's much wisdom in a stick—a capital teacher is a cudgel! These upstart fellows think because their fathers were born in Normandy, they may outrage each and all of us poor Englishmen with impunity. Out on them! But I shall be in a rage presently. Hillo—ho—Marian, why don't you come with the ale?"

Marian entered with the flagon as he spoke, and filled two capacious drinking horns, and handed them to her father and his guest.

"Waes hael! friend Acca Bacca Ben Dabra," said the Saxon.

"Waes hael! friend Jordan, the tanner, and a better memory to you for people's names," replied the doctor.

"Come, another horn," said Marian, as the doctor swallowed the contents of the first; and as she filled it from the flagon, she bent down and whispered something in his ear.

"What does the slut say?" inquired the tanner, while Marian's face was suffused with blushes.

"She wants me to prepare a love charm," said the doctor, with a sly but scarcely perceptible wink to the maiden.

"A what?" said the tanner.

"A love charm," replied Doctor Acadabra.

"Love be hanged!" said the tanner, sharply. "What business has such a child as that to talk of love charms? Love your father, you foolish girl."

"And do I not?" replied Marian, archly looking at him from between her half-closed eyes—and then turning to the doctor, she again whispered in his ear, and then added aloud: "Oh, you vile man, to betray a maiden's secrets. But I wont have your love charm now; I'll have nothing to do with it. Have you anything good for chilblains?"

"Yes, and for coughs, colds, fevers, quinsies, dropsies, gout, rheumatism, lumbago, scrofula, tooth-ache, ear-ache, head-ache, stomach-ache, and many other maladies, besides some invaluable remedies against witches, spirits, and the evil one himself."

"Gad a' mercy then," said the tanner, "give me a remedy against witchcraft."

"I'll bring thee one to-morrow," replied the doctor.—"I must go now. I have done my errand, and cannot stay longer to-night.—The moon is up, and I have some herbs to prepare. Good bye, my pretty ones," he added, with another nod to Marian, which was noticed by Friedolinda, but not by the tanner.—"Good bye."

"Farewell," said Jordan, shaking his hand; "but none of your love nonsense for these girls.—Do you hear?"

"Never fear me!" said the doctor, as he put on his mantle, and withdrawing, left the family to themselves.

It was nearly eight o'clock—a late hour for them—and the serving-maid Bertha having laid their frugal supper, the father and his daughters sat down to it. In less than an hour they had all retired to their chambers, and silence reigned in the house.

CHAPTER III.

"'Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore."

CAMPBELL.

ABRA BEN ACADABRA was one of those impostors, who in all ages subsist upon the credulity of the ignorant, and who, joining to a small degree of knowledge a great degree of pretension, manage to impress the vulgar with a veneration, not only very pleasant, but very lucrative. He boasted that he had considerable skill in the preparation of simples, and was regarded by the populace of all the towns and villages which he honoured by his visits, as a most learned leech, who could cure all diseases, however inveterate. But he had other sources both of profit and power. He pretended to be able to pierce the secrets of futurity, and was very generally consulted, not only by the young upon affairs of the heart, but by the old in matters of business. He knew all the fortunate and unfortunate days in the calendar; could advise when to begin, and when to end an important enterprise—could prevent witches from drying up the cows, or fairies from substituting changelings for the darling babes of partial mothers; and could lay a ghost in the Red Sea with as great facility as any of his predecessors in the heart of cheating.

Jordan was not exactly aware of all his accomplishments in this respect, or, warm-hearted as he was, he would not have been so ready to shake hands with a man, who, for all he knew to the contrary, might have received a similar salute from the arch enemy. The merry Marian knew a little more of his great powers, but she had no thoughts of evil. She heeded neither ghosts nor witches, but merely longed, with all the curiosity of her age and sex, to pry into the secrets of the invisible to come. She desired to know, as many maidens have done in ages far more enlightened, certain particulars with regard to the object of her heart's choice; whether her love were returned, and whether her life would be happy in loving. It was a wish to this effect, that she had whispered in his ear, and the purport of which she had endeavoured to disguise from her father.

It was about eleven o'clock of the same evening we have already mentioned. The tanner was fast asleep. The dog was chained in the yard, out of hearing of the street. The tanner's two daughters were up and dressed, and had stolen softly from their chamber to the large front room where we

have already seen them. The fire in the midst was extinguished, and the small lamp which Marian carried in her hand threw a dim light over the black walls, "making the darkness visible."

"Marian, dear," said Friedolinda, in a low whisper, taking the lamp from her hand, and holding it up so as to catch a more distinct view of the room, and the objects in it; "it is very foolish of us. I blame myself for having consented to this. We ought to know better. Let us return!"

"No—if thou lovest me, my overwise and most learned sister," replied Marian, in as soft a whisper. "I would run much greater risk to know the secrets of my fate."

"Better that we should remain in ignorance," said Friedolinda. "Besides, I doubt the power of our necromancer; and it is wrong to see him alone and at this hour.—Hark! how the wind roars through the street! Let us go to bed again, Marian; he will not venture abroad in such a night as this."

The wind had indeed arisen, and swept down the deserted streets with a melancholy howling. The rain pattered against the windows as it was driven by the gusts, and Marian, as she listened, felt half inclined to follow her sister's advice, and retire again to her repose. But a sudden paleness came over her, and she clasped her sister round the neck, as she exclaimed: "Oh Friedolinda, we dare not return.—We must abide and see the end of it. Hast thou never heard, that having once entered upon an undertaking like ours, it is a thousand times safer to go through with it, than to leave it unfinished?"

"I have no faith in his charms or his skill. Hark to the tempest!" said Friedolinda; "the seer, if such he be, will hardly venture abroad on such a night as this!"

"The very night he would choose," said Marian, with a solemnity which her sister had never before remarked in her; "and I am bent on knowing whatever his art can teach of the future. Why should we fear?"

"Because we are meddling with matters beyond our province to know," replied her sister.

"Is it beyond our province to know our own fate?" inquired Marian. "But, sister, if thou wilt not wait with me, I will wait alone. I never yet set my heart upon anything without accomplishing it—and I will accomplish this. Come now, my grave, solemn monitress,—come and kiss me. Thou lookest, I declare, more like a marble statue of the Holy Mary than like my sister Friedolinda. Thou shalt not remain with me and pout."

"If thou art resolved, I will not leave thee," replied Friedo-

linda, who had the same curiosity as her sister, but was somewhat too proud to avow it.

"There's a good girl. The wise Abra Ben Acadabra shall foretel thee a prosperous fate, for thy sisterly consideration for me. Thou shalt be happily wed to one William Fitzosbert, who loves thee truly—as he ought to do," said Marian, with all her usual colour in her cheeks, and smiling and looking so playful and so innocent, that her sister clasped her to her bosom as if she had been an infant, and covered her face with kisses.

"But thou art a foolish girl, Marian; and if I consent to see the end of this adventure, thou must promise not to attempt the like again."

"Oh! I'll promise anything after my fortune's told," said Marian; "but oh, sister, it is an awful night! How the wind bellows!—as if it were enraged at the city, and were determined to hurl its spires and buildings to the ground at one blast. Alas, for the houseless!"

"Hark, what was that?" said Friedolinda, as a low whistle was heard in the street, and after the interval of a minute was again repeated.

"It is he," whispered Marian, turning deadly pale; "it is he; shall we let him in?"

"Oh, no, no," said Friedolinda; "should our father awaken and find him here, he would never forgive us."

"Hark! he is at the door; if we do not let him in, he will awaken our father with knocking—hark!"

Marian, putting her finger to her lips, glided to the door, and, lifting the latch, admitted their visitor. It was the doctor Abra Ben Acadabra, his face pale, his eyes haggard, and his beard dripping with the rain.

"I have come," said he, "according to my promise. But why do you tremble? are you afraid?"

"Since you are here," said Friedolinda, to the astonishment of her sister, who clung timidly to her side, "tell us what you know, if indeed your power can fathom the mysteries which God has hidden from our view."

"Do you doubt?" said Acadabra, still standing by the threshold, while the rain dripped from his garments; "do you think I would have braved this storm merely to frighten you?"

"I am not afraid," replied Friedolinda, firmly, "but I doubt."

"Then it is happy for you! Belief would but make you wretched; for fear your unbelief should not endure, you had much better not seek to know."

"Do not hear it, sister," exclaimed Marian, who was more alarmed at the solemnity of the man's manner, than she knew.

"I will hear all he can tell me," said Friedolinda; "nothing can terrify me."

"Set down the lamp then," said Acadabra, "and show me your palm. The planets tell one tale of you; let us see if chiromancy can tell another."

"'Tis the same fate," he continued, after perusing attentively the lines on her delicate hand; "shall I say on?"

Friedolinda nodded, and Marian held her breath in anxiety. "The planets foretel for thee, my fair maiden, a troubled life; but, nevertheless, a life of love required."

"Is that all?" inquired Friedolinda.

"A life of sorrow; but love shall triumph. Wilt thou hear more?"

"It is enough; I desire no better fate. Yet see if thou canst predict a fate no fairer for my sister; yet why should she wish a fairer? If love triumph at the last, weak and unworthy is the heart that would shrink from the contest with the world, and refuse to do battle for so bright a reward. Hold out thy palm, Marian."

"Nay," said Marian, "let him tell us something of the past; by his truth in that we may know what reliance to place on his promises for the future."

"If you doubted my skill, why did you send for me?" said Acadabra; "but I know more of the past history of you both than you know yourselves. Listen:—"

"Friedolinda Jordan, there is one man in London, pre-eminent above all his race, a man whose soul is full of lofty aspirations, from whose dizzy heights he now and then stoops to breathe the tender love tale in your ear. You love him, and yet not many hours ago you resolved to refuse his hand if he offered it; is it not so?"

Friedolinda started, the blood rushed to her cheeks, and her ears tingled with her blushes; in a minute afterwards the crimson tide flowed back, making her heart beat rapidly, but leaving her cheek as pale as marble.

"Have I not divined your most secret thought?" continued Acadabra; "do you doubt me now? did you not commune with yourself this night, and say, 'I will not by my love distract Fitzosbert from his mighty cause; I will not approach too near him, but will worship and pray for him at a distance?'"

"I'll hear no more," said Friedolinda; "you have seized part of my secret, but not all."

"Enough, perhaps, to convince you of my skill; and now, my younger and more tender flower, shall I read thy heart?"

"Tell me of the future, and not of the past, or of the present," said Marian, holding out her little hand to the conjuror, who bent with the lamp over it for a few minutes. Satisfied with the scrutiny, he gazed for another minute on the bright face before him, and noticed the half-timid and half-anxious glances of her blue eyes, and the blush of her smooth cheek.

"There is no sorrow around thee yet," he said, after a pause, "and I will not invoke it by showing thee thy doom. Live thou, and be happy while thou mayest,—walk warily,—and thy dark day may be averted. The green woods are merry,—and thou wouldst make a pretty sylvan queen. Fare thee well!"

The conjuror threw his wet cloak around him, received the piece of money which the younger sister dropped into his hand, and withdrew.

The two sisters retired silently to their chamber. Gloom could not dwell long in the light heart of the younger; and thinking of the green wood that he had hinted at, and of one who dwelt there, she sank into a slumber as sound as that of an infant. Not so Friedolinda: her incredulity had received a shock; her spirits sank; and a feeling of utter loneliness and sorrow came over her, as she lay for hours awake, listening to the hollow moaning of the night wind. In the pauses of the storm she heard the regular breathing of her sister, and envied her that repose so sweet,—a repose which she courted in vain. The thoughts of her heart—a heart full of love and anxiety—kept her awake on her uneasy couch, until exhausted nature sunk at last into a restless slumber. But her dreams were as perturbed as her waking thoughts. She dreamed that in the recesses of a thick and tangled forest she was wandering all barefoot and alone; that the rain was pouring down in torrents upon her bare head, while her drenched hair hung down in matted locks upon her pale face and white shoulders. Suddenly she heard a groan. On looking round she saw a wounded man extended upon the wet grass, his blood mingling with the rain drops which streamed from his garments. On gazing in his face she perceived to her horror that it was a face familiar to her,—indistinctly familiar, as faces in dreams are, and, though she knew it well, she could not say whose it was. She strove to cry out for assistance, but a suffocating oppression at her throat prevented her utterance. At last she gathered strength enough to give one faint shriek of terror and supplication.

Turning herself round, she perceived, to her great relief, that she was still on her couch, her unconscious sister slumbering peacefully by her side. Again she slumbered; but her visions were not more peaceful than before. She fancied herself in a deep and thorny dale, encircled and pent in by high, black-looking, and poison-distilling trees. Dark night was coming on, and she endeavoured to escape from the dreary spot, and from the noxious vapours that were rising rapidly around her from the damp and infectious ground. Every time she endeavoured to make her way through the lacerating brushwood, a hideous and scowling visage peered at her from behind a tree, and frightened her back again. Then a multitude of fiendish faces filled the place, and grinned at her in all the intensity of their ugliness, staring into her eyes with an expression so insulting and so hideous that the agony became too great for endurance. Then they suddenly vanished, and she was enabled to make her way through the trees. Again she heard a groan; and groping onward, she stumbled over a wounded man, extended upon the sward. She gazed upon his face in agony; the features seemed at first indistinct; but gradually assuming form, she recognised the Norman knight Le Boutelier. His eyes flashed upon her mingled glances of love and fury, and his cold hand grasped her so tightly that she screamed out loudly for succour. The effort awoke her. She was still extended on her couch, but she felt that the hair of her head stood on end, and that a cold perspiration bedewed her limbs. She determined no longer to court repose, since sleep only brought such horrid visions to her imagination. Arising, she dressed herself, and sat down by the bedside of her sister. There she remained listening to the howling storm, until the first gray hues of dawn peeped over the housetops in the east.

CHAPTER IV.

“*Feu—feu—sang—sang—et ruines.*”

VICTOR HUGO.

JORDAN, the tanner, as has already been mentioned, was a great man among the Saxon malcontents of London, but their chief and leader was William Fitzosbert, commonly called the LONGBEARD. At the period of the commencement of our tale, he was in his thirty-fifth year, and in the height of his power and popularity. The younger of the two sons of John

Fitzosbert, a trader of the city, he had been originally designed for the priesthood, on account of his repugnance to trade, and his unsoldierly appearance, (he was a hunchback,) which shut him out from the military career. In his early youth, he acquired all the learning which only fell, in those days, to the lot of churchmen; but disliking the quiet life of the cloisters, he went, like others, to Palestine, to distinguish himself under the banners of the cross; and, in those irregular armies, his deformity was not a matter of much moment. He performed prodigies of valour, and was knighted on the field of battle by Richard Cœur de Lion. When the expedition under that prince was at an end, he returned to England, where a new field of ambition opened itself out before him. Endowed by nature with many rare gifts, he soon concentrated them all to the attainment of one object—a chimerical one, it is true—the emancipation of the Saxon race in England from the tyranny of their Norman masters. He was the grand democrat of the day, the “the apostle of the people,” or, as he loved to be called, “the saviour of the poor.” He lived with all the abstinence and severity of a Diogenes. He was an enthusiast in every cause which he undertook; and although he may have been flattered by the power he acquired, he embraced the cause of the Saxon malcontents from an innate conviction of its righteousness, and a sincere desire to relieve his fellow-Saxons from oppression. It was not all at once that he formed the idea of becoming a popular leader. Naturally gifted with a rare eloquence, he had often, when present at any trial before the city dignitaries, successfully supported the cause of the poor. His singular, and almost prophet-like appearance, his power of language, and his unceasing advocacy of the rights of the poor and the oppressed, soon brought him into notoriety. As it was enthusiasm which first led him to enter this course, so it was enthusiasm which induced him to continue in it. His hatred of the Normans was intense, and to be as far as it was possible different from them was his unceasing object. It was from his desire to be the very opposite of them and their fashions, that he allowed his beard to grow to an unusual length,—from which fashion he acquired the name of Longbeard, by which he was best known to his contemporaries. Perhaps, also, a sort of charlatanerie, from which even high minds are not always exempt, made him endeavour to appear singular in his attire and demeanour. His very shape was in his favour; and, in process of time, he became the idol of the populace. In his progress through the city, he was attended by a regular band of defenders, who walked behind him to

protect him from insult or injury. His eloquence, even in the few and unfriendly notices that have been handed down concerning him, is represented as having been astounding. His melancholy, but expressive features, seemed to glow with an energy almost superhuman, when haranguing his numerous and attentive auditory. Even those who had come to ridicule the pretensions of the hunchback, were awed into respect, and finally into admiration at beholding him.

His elder brother, Bryan Fitzosbert, had similar feelings, and was captain of one of the many bands that then existed in almost every county in England, half freebooters, half huntsmen, who lived in the woods, set the forest laws of the Normans at defiance, and exacted a sort of tribute—such they called it, though the victims of it called it a robbery—of every rich Norman who fell in their way, or was too weak to wage successful war against them.

Like Robin Hood, Bryan Fitzosbert commanded a troop of “merry men”—Saxon archers—who robbed the rich to give to the poor; was the idol of one class of society, in whose tales and songs he received honourable mention for all the virtues that can adorn humanity; while the other class considered him a bandit, who ought to have been affixed to the city gates in an iron cage, as an example to all beholders. Bryan Fitzosbert was, however, comparatively little known in London, where his brother reigned supreme over the people, but led a free life in the wild woods of Blean, in Kent, having no ambition to become more powerful than he was. William Fitzosbert had learned to think more deeply than his brother. Visions of popular freedom floated in his mind. He had read of the multitudes of ancient Rome; and the stern Spartans, whose history he was well acquainted with, were the models he would have imitated, had he possessed the power to found a republic like theirs in London; and of that new Sparta he would have been the new Lycurgus. Early brought into contact with Jordan, the tanner, he soon saw and appreciated the blunt honesty of that worthy Saxon's character, and a strict friendship was formed between them. He became a mind or soul to Jordan, and Jordan became a right-hand to him, to execute his behest, whatever it might be, well convinced that what William Longbeard commanded would be in itself not only justifiable but meritorious. And there was another link that bound them together—the fair Friedolinda. William Longbeard had often vowed to himself that no woman should ever rule his heart; that Freedom alone should be his mistress; and that her charms only should captivate his fancy. But the first day he saw

Friedolinda, his resolution was shaken. The seriousness and grandeur of her beauty, so unlike anything he had ever seen before, made an impression upon his heart, which the charms of her more beautiful sister, Marian, could never have excited. And when he found, in spite of the hunch on his back—that hunch which had always made him so shy of women, lest they should laugh at his deformity—that she took pleasure in his society, that she listened with interest to the glowing tales of the adventures he had gone through, of the aspirations he had formed, and of the dreams of liberty that haunted him night and day, he seemed to acquire a new life, to have gained another tie to bind him more closely to humanity—another hope to exist and struggle for. People may talk of the power of wealth, and rank, and manly beauty, in gaining the affections of women, but the eloquent tongue is far surer than all. Eloquence to them makes even deformity beautiful, and poverty rich, and throws a halo of glory around its possessor, whatever his station may be. This Shakspeare knew—and what secret of the universal human heart did he not know? and the love of Othello the Moor—hard and ill-featured as he was—found more favour in the eyes of the gentle Desdemona, than the protestations of younger, richer, and more handsome men, who had not his winning eloquence. So was it with Friedolinda Jordan and William Fitzosbert. She listened to him with delight, she was always happy in his presence, and uneasy in his absence. The same feeling occupied his breast; but sure of her love, he never as yet thought of asking for her hand. The father saw how matters stood between them, and approving of the love of his child for his dearest friend and companion, he allowed things to take their own course, and never thought of hurrying an avowal which he supposed Fitzosbert would make in due time.

When Longbeard was made acquainted with the constant persecution of the Norman knight, Le Boutelier, he determined to call the offender to account, for the private injury and the public wrong which he considered to be in this case combined. Citizens' daughters were continually outraged by these Norman aristocrats, and now he thought was an occasion to make an example of one of them. But Le Boutelier was never to be found;—a mere chance visitor to London, he had no abiding place in it, and Longbeard thought that perhaps the unpleasant issue of his adventure in Smithfield might teach him not to renew the attempt. But this adventure, trifling as it seemed, was the occasion of a great sacrifice of human life, and almost of the destruction of

the city of London itself, as will be seen from the narrative of the events that followed it.

William Le Boutelier complained to Fitzalwyne, the warlike Mayor of London, of the outrage he had suffered from the mob in Smithfield, and the most rigid inquiries were instituted by his order, to discover the delinquents. The houses of suspected persons were entered by the city functionaries; and in a quarrel which ensued, a blacksmith, known by the name of William Marichal, was knocked down, trampled on, and besides being otherwise severely injured, received a stab in the right arm, which disabled him from attending to his usual occupation. The breast of Longbeard glowed with indignation when this was made known to him. He attended before Fitzalwyne, who sat in his coat of mail at the Guildhall, to hear the complaint, and was dismissed with sharp words, and told not to meddle in business which did not concern him. Longbeard forthwith convened a general meeting of the Saxons, at Paul's Cross, to hear the story of their wrongs, and debate on the measures that should be taken in consequence.

Fitzalwyne, the mayor, was very popular among the richer burghers—so popular, that he was for no less a period than four-and-twenty years the chief magistrate of London; but among the populace he was universally hated, chiefly on account of his oft-expressed hostility to their favourite, Longbeard. When the announcement of the intended gathering of the people at Paul's Cross was made to him, he summoned a council of burghers, in which it was determined that the meeting should be dispersed by force of arms, if the people refused to depart after a due summons. They took their measures accordingly. And it was further resolved, that if any blood were shed, Longbeard should be held accountable. As the great gathering was not to be held for three days, they had full time to deliberate.

At last the grand day arrived. The morning dawned, but it was grey and misty. A heavy fog covered the city, and a drizzling rain, which pierced the garments as if each drop had been a needle, fell in the dim and deserted streets. The warlike burghers, with Fitzalwyne at their head, feared that the meeting might not take place, for they flattered themselves that the result of the measures they had taken would be the dispersion of the mob, and the total overthrow of the dangerous power of William Longbeard. They longed for a fair pretext to arrest him, and they feared that so fair an opportunity might not occur again; for as yet he had broken no law, and was not amenable to their vengeance. But as the

morning wore on, the rain abated—the overcharged vapours rolled from the sky, and the sun shone forth in unclouded brilliancy. The shops of the city were still partially closed, and here and there a dame or a servant might be seen standing at a door, each communicating with her neighbour upon some event, which by the animation of their looks and gestures, seemed of great importance. Around the venerable and gothic pile of St. Paul's, which stood upon the same ground as that occupied by the present magnificent cathedral, groups of men of from twenty to thirty each, had gathered, and, by their threatening looks, seemed to be brooding over some no very peaceable intent. Every instant these groups kept increasing in number, till at last the whole space in front of the church, and down Ludgate-hill, as far as the little bridge of planks over the Fleet-river, was impassable from the density of the crowd. Many hundreds of them knew not the reason of the assemblage; some thought a criminal was to be beheaded, and a still greater proportion had congregated for no other reason than that they had seen others do so. The crowd at length became so thick, that it seemed to undulate like a fluid, or like the standing corn, when waved to and fro by a mighty wind. Those living in distant parts of the city heard a noise resembling the moaning of the tall oaks, when their leaves are scattered and their boughs splintered by the rush of a tempest, or like the distant roar of breakers on some dangerous coast. To those nearer, and in the crowd, the noise was more awful than the uproar of the elements. Howling, roaring, yelling, cursing, laughing, and groaning, the mighty and discontented mass waved to and fro, till all of a sudden a shout was heard, so loud and overpowering, that those in the adjoining houses felt the very rafters shake with the concussion. On a temporary platform, which had been suddenly erected near the steps of the church, whose black tower seemed to frown upon the unruly populace, two or three men had appeared, one of whom, whose head was uncovered, and whose long hair and beard were streaming in the wind, seemed to be the object of the applause of the multitude. Again the uproar was redoubled, and cries of “Down with the tallage! death to Fitzalwyne!” and “Longbeard for ever!” predominated amid the tumult of the throng.

“Which is Longbeard?” said a man in the crowd to his neighbour.

“There, can you not see?” replied the person addressed.

“Hurrah! he's the friend of the poor! Death to the tyrants! Longbeard for ever!”

“And that stout man next him?”

"Jordan—good old Jordan, the tanner. Hurrah!"

"And that other?"

"Marichal, whose arm—once as strong as the Longbeard's tongue—was disabled by the Normans. Hurrah!"

Thus the mob were vociferating, shouting, and roaring, their fierce and ungovernable passions already at work, and awaiting only a signal to break loose; when Fitzosbert took his place on the platform, and folding his arms on his breast, looked down upon the wild and unruly sea of human beings which was thus agitated before him.

The deformed, and once despised man, looked down upon them with pride, and smiled to think that, although his back was not straight, he yet stood there pre-eminent above them all. His ears were flattered by the acclamations that thundered around him, his ambitious soul drank in the uproar greedily as an omen of future greatness.

Spreading out his hands, he began to address the crowd, and all were immediately hushed into attention. He spoke of their wrongs—of the insults of rapacious wealth—of the outrages on maiden innocence—of the sufferings of the poor, and of the day of retribution which was at hand. Now he ridiculed the pride and the pomp of the burgesses and the magistracy; and the immense crowd shouted with laughter. Now he talked of the poor widow, whose last mite had been wrenched from her lean hands by the grinding tax-gatherer; and the people wept for grief, and stamped with indignation. Then he pictured the cringing reptiles, who grew sleek and purseproud upon the produce of their sweat; and the mob hissed and hooted as one man. Then he turned his eyes to Heaven, and prayed in a low voice (every accent of which, so measured and so clear, seemed to pierce to the utmost limits of the crowd), that the Almighty would take vengeance on their oppressors, and do battle in the cause of the suffering and the weary; and then a shout rent the sky, and the mass began to move, as if impelled onward by some irresistible tide. At that instant every steeple in the metropolis sent forth its sonorous alarm, and the huge bell of St. Paul's, right behind the speaker, raised a clamour so deafening that the crowd could no longer hear the words of the orator. A troop of horsemen at the same time suddenly made their appearance from the narrow defiles of Cheapside, their bright armour glistening in the sun, and their tall spears shining over the heads of the populace. Then was the confusion at its height. The tumult of the bells, which pealed as if each one had been endowed with life, and was ready to burst its iron sides in an agony of fear—the redoubled noise sent forth

from the distended throats of ten thousand furious and excited men—the shrieks of women, the squalling of affrighted children, the neighing of the horses, and the warlike clangour of the trumpets of the soldiery, altogether made a conglomeration of sounds, so dreadful as to almost madden for the time all who heard it.

As it was evident from the first that the mob were to be dispersed by force of arms, they were not altogether unprepared, when the troops, led by Fitzalwyne, the mayor, spurred their chargers into the midst of them. A detachment of about forty of the soldiery reached within a few yards of the scaffolding where the Longbeard and his associates stood; and summoned him to surrender himself a prisoner. The crowd replied by a shout of defiance. Fitzalwyne and the burghers had miscalculated the temper of the people. They were not awed, but exasperated, by the military display, and the daring attempt to seize their leader in the very midst of them. The troops were completely hemmed in; and one tall fellow seized the bridle of Fitzalwyne's horse with the one hand, while with the other he aimed a blow at his head with a bludgeon, which nearly felled the chief magistrate to the earth. The Mayor of London quickly recovered himself, and with one stroke from his weapon laid his assailant under his horse's feet, from whence he never rose again, as the charger, in its affrighted prancing, struck its hoof into his brain. This catastrophe was the signal for a regular battle, and the struggle thus commenced tremendously to the disadvantage of the men-at-arms of the city, several of whom were felled to the earth by their assailants. A fresh troop, however, wheeled suddenly into the crowd from the direction of the Lud-gate, and proceeded to the rescue of Fitzalwyne and his men, who were well-nigh overpowered by the masses which kept advancing upon them like billows in a strong tide. The Longbeard was not idle; he saw, from the turn that events had taken, that his life and liberty were at stake on the issue of the encounter, and his voice still inspired his partizans to fresh exertions,—when one of the soldiery pointed an arrow at his breast with a sure and deliberate aim. Fitzosbert fell, and a groan resounded from one end of the street to the other. The dismay of the populace was, however, but of short duration, for he almost immediately arose with the arrow in his hand, which he hurled at the head of Fitzalwyne, who, suddenly stooping on the neck of his horse, missed the blow. The Longbeard, knowing the danger of his career, always took the precaution whenever he went abroad to wear a strong coat of mail under his mantle of serge. The super-

stitious soldiery, thinking his life was charmed, began to give way, when the same archer, who had discharged the unavailing arrow at Fitzosbert, bent his bow once more towards the platform. This time the shaft was more successful, and the tall gaunt figure of Marichal fell reeling from the scaffolding into the crowd. There was another groan, which was immediately succeeded by a cry for vengeance, and the mounted horsemen received a still more overwhelming shock than any they had yet experienced. Fitzalwyne, and five or six of his stanchest followers, set spurs to their steeds, which, maddened by the tumult, galloped wildly through the mob and were quickly out of danger, although many a deadly blow was aimed at their riders during their perilous progress. The discomfiture of the city forces was now complete. Upwards of thirty of the horsemen were slain, and a still greater number of the insurgents perished.

"To the Lombards!" "To the Lombards!" was now the cry. "Ay! ay! to the Lombards! to the Lombards!" repeated a hundred voices. "To the Lombards, and death to Fitzalwyne!"

The crowd moved onward; and one of them rushing into a house, quickly reappeared with a lighted torch in his hand, which he brandished in the air; his lank features glowing with rage and malice.

The bells still kept up their monotonous tolling, as if wailing and groaning for the deeds of slaughter that had been done. All this while the sun had been shining in unclouded brilliancy—the bright and serene appearance of the heavens affording a striking contrast to the riotous and bloody scenes which had been taking place below. Now and then the shrill and appalling neigh of a dying horse was heard above the tumult, even of the alarm bells, as the crowd proceeded, shouting and yelling, in the direction of Lombard-street, in which was the residence of Fitzalwyne. The space in front of the church was soon left clear.

It was about an hour after the occurrences above-mentioned, when the large doors of the gothic pile of St. Paul's slowly opened, and a strain of solemn music was heard proceeding from the interior of the sacred building. A procession of monks and priests, in their white robes, headed by the Bishop of London, wound gradually from the porch, while their slow and awful music, as they chaunted forth the inspired and affecting words of the "De profundis," stole softly upon the ears of a few disconsolate and nearly broken-hearted women, who were weeping over the slain. One of the dead soldiers was a handsome and fair-haired young man.

He seemed to have died peaceably and without a struggle, for there was no distortion on his youthful face. He appeared to the eye as if he were asleep, but those who felt his hands, found that they were cold and clammy. Over his body was extended the elegant form of a young woman, whose long black hair was streaming dishevelled over her shoulders, and who was weeping and sobbing bitterly, calling at intervals upon her slaughtered husband. A beautiful boy, about two years old, with blue eyes and flaxen hair, was also standing by, with the big tears chasing each other down his cheeks. In the occasional pauses of its sorrow, it put its innocent hands among the light curls of its father's hair, and, bending down, kissed his dead lips, seemingly surprised that the caress was unnoticed by the parent who used to be so fond. The lips of the good bishop were observed to quiver, and his grey eye to moisten, as the procession stayed by the group. The sorrow-stricken widow was raised from the ground by his orders, but she refused to listen to the voice of consolation. Claspings her babe to her bosom with a grasp so strong that the child was frightened, she wept a deluge of tears upon its cheeks; and when the sympathizing priest once more attempted to breathe the words of comfort to her heart, she suddenly fell upon her knees, and begged, for the sake of the Holy Virgin of Pity, that he would give orders for the body of her husband to be transported to her own home. Her request was instantly complied with, and the disconsolate widow and her orphan followed it.

From another part of the city the shouts of the populace might still be heard, as the "real presence" proceeded slowly around the churchyard of St. Paul's; the monks, and the attendant incense bearers, stopping to pray over each corpse, or to administer the last consolation to those who were still living, but visibly dying; while the bishop sprinkled it with the holy water, which was borne behind him in silver ewers by the choristers. The evening of this tumultuous day was now closing in. Masses of clouds were gathering on the horizon, the sun had just set, and a full bright moon had arisen, looking down tranquilly upon the disturbed city. The procession re-entered the church, and half-a-dozen men, dressed in the long coarse garments of the inferior order of monks, issued forth, and carried the bodies into the cathedral, there to rest till they were claimed by their friends or relatives.

This done, the bishop once more issued from the gothic portal of the church, dressed in his full canonical robes, with his head uncovered, and his venerable locks streaming to the

breeze. A line of monks, each bearing a wax taper, followed and the bishop proceeded down Ludgate Hill towards Fleet Street.

Scarcely had they arrived half-way down the hill, when a loud cry was heard from a remote part of the city,—louder and louder it sounded, and the monks, turning, looked into each other's faces as if inquiring what new calamity had happened. A broad red blaze of light, which suddenly shot up into the sky, proclaimed that the work of destruction had begun. Redder and redder the blaze extended itself over one half of the firmament, and billows of smoke rushed upwards to mingle with the clouds. The male inhabitants came out of their houses, and pressed onwards to the scene of the conflagration; while the females rushed wildly from their doors, and, kneeling down in the open street, muttered a few incoherent sentences of prayer to the Virgin, or some favourite saint. The city was almost as light as at mid-day: every object was fearfully distinct, and the bishop, instead of proceeding as he had intended, returned again into the cathedral, followed by crowds of women, where solemn prayers were offered up for the safety of the city. Not a man was there except the ecclesiastics,—all the male population hurried to the scene of devastation, some to aid in extinguishing, but many to increase it.

CHAPTER V.

"Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?"

"Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true!"

Much Ado about Nothing.

THE Mayor of London, supported as he was by only a few dispirited burghers, saw the city so completely in the power of the insurgents, that all resistance seemed vain. But he was not a man to sit tamely by and see the destruction which might, after all, by a bold effort be averted; and with incredible personal exertions he got together about five hundred of the principal citizens to defend their property from the torch which was blazing to destroy it. Galloping from street to street, and from alley to alley, he aroused them from the lethargy into which excess of fear had thrown them, and stationed them at the leading avenues to resist the crowd if they attempted further destruction. He gave up his own house freely—there was no hope of that—and when he saw the flames and smoke mounting in mingled columns to the

sky, and heard the loud shout of exultation with which the mob hailed the accomplishment of their vengeance, he prepared himself to resist to the death the next attempt they might make. All this time, the Longbeard was riding in the thickest of the crowd, armed with a huge battle-axe; he was at every point of the street in an instant, threatening and imploring his friends, but all in vain, to stay the work of ruin and retire peaceably to their homes. But they would not move for him. His voice, so eloquent in exciting, was powerless to allay their passions. They had vowed the destruction of Fitzalwyne's house, and of Fitzalwyne himself, if he fell into their hands, and were so excited that the Longbeard's exhortations were not made without serious personal risk. The crowd were intoxicated with fury; and as the flames shot up, they formed into rings and danced about for joy. But with a sort of method in their madness they resolved that no robbery should be committed. The rich furniture was broken into splinters; the cloth of gold, and the arras and the fine workmanship, the velvets and the silks, and the rich plate, were cast ruthlessly into the fire, and one man who was caught purloining a jewel, was forced into the flames by his companions and burnt to death. The tears flowed down the Longbeard's cheeks as he saw the evil that was doing—evil which he had excited without intending, but which he could not allay any more than the humblest and most obscure among them. All night the mob watched the burning pile, manifesting no determination to extend their ravages further, and all night the citizens were under arms in the purlieus, not meddling with them, by Fitzalwyne's orders, until they should begin to spread the work of ruin to other quarters of the city. At last the morning dawned, and not a stone of Fitzalwyne's house was left standing. The mob then, with a tremendous cheer, broke up, and all danger was over.

Leaving London for awhile, we must now change the scene to the palace of Archbishop Hubert, near Canterbury, whither Fitzalwyne at different periods of that eventful night had despatched messengers to crave advice and assistance. Hubert, Archbishop both of Rouen and Canterbury, was appointed by king Richard to the office of co-regent of the kingdom, and lord high justiciary. His province more peculiarly was to take note of all treasons, insurrections, and riots. He could also summon to his bar, to answer for his conduct, any offender against life or property. To him also were made all appeals. He had long watched the proceedings, and been aware of the ambition of William Fitzosbert, and had continually received complaints of his conduct from the

magistracy of London ; but as he had on no occasion resorted to actual violence, the archbishop was at a loss to decide how he might be brought under his jurisdiction. He at length resolved to let matters take their course, and to give himself no trouble until the Longbeard fairly implicated himself in some proceeding which might render him amenable to the law. This resolution suited not only the justice of the case, but the indolence of his disposition. The affairs of the state were too heavy for him, and he looked upon every piece of public business which he was called upon to transact, as a nuisance which he could not too speedily get rid of. He was one of those persons who have not decision enough to take a strong resolution, but whose minds are swayed from side to side, and from opinion to opinion, by any person's persuasion. He was "all things with all men," and of the opinion of whomsoever might be conversing with him. He had an instinctive horror of everything like promptitude, and he would always procrastinate his decisions as long as he could. He was a well-favoured and contented-looking man, and, although long past the middle age, there was not a wrinkle on his brow, nor a grey hair in his head. Unlike most of the clerical dignitaries of his time, his tastes were neither sylvan nor warlike, he neither loved to hunt nor to fight, neither was he overburdened with any extraordinary degree of devotional fervour. Had he lived in our days, he would have made a very convenient member of parliament,—one of those conscientious and useful men who invariably vote on the strongest side, and who, taking care to keep out of the house during the debate, arrive always in time for the division. But still the worthy archbishop was not wholly devoid of amusement or excitement ; he was master of what was called the profane learning of that age, and took a most unclerical pleasure in the pages of Ovid. He knew Greek too, and read Homer in the original. But his grand solace and amusement was the game of chess, in which he was a proficient, and which occupied fully six hours out of every day. He had just finished a game that he had won, and was seated in his comfortable arm-chair, quite pleased with the achievement, at the time we propose to introduce him to the reader. The state, it should be said, was no loser by his indolence and love of chess, for he had around him, as councillors and advisers, many astute, clear-sighted, and resolute men, whose wishes guided the vessel of which he was but the helm.

It was a clear morning in April, and the archbishop rose from his table, and proceeded towards the window of the old monastery of St. Augustine at Canterbury, which he ther

inhabited. The window was open, and the healthy morning breeze swept freely into the apartment. The air was all alive with jocund sounds ; around the window and amid the leafy recesses of the dark ivy which clambered up the wall, was heard the twitter of numerous sparrows, while from high in the air descended the jovial and grateful song of the happy lark, pouring out its exuberant melodies to the morning sun. The archbishop looked out, and, deeply alive to the poetry of nature, as men of luxurious indolence generally are, he felt soothed and refreshed by the view. The woody country had that beautiful appearance peculiar to the spring. The forest trees glittered in every variety of hue—from lightest green to darkest brown. The tall oaks still preserved the dark aspect they had worn during the winter, but the wild chestnut, and other trees, that blossom early, had already put on their robes of verdure. The birch, the maple, the poplar, and the ash, each presented a different hue in the sunshine. All nature was alive, and redolent of joy under the influence of the revivifying weather. The archbishop continued for some time to inhale the pure breeze which streamed in at his window. It seemed also that he had noted something more than usual in the view ; for, after shading his eyes with his hands, to render his vision clearer, he hastily rang a little bell. A page immediately obeyed the summons.

"Come hither, boy," said the archbishop ; "thine eyes are young, and ought to be sharp-sighted ; now look from the window, and tell me what sort of a horseman is he, who comes riding towards us?"

The page approached the window as desired.

"Now, what thinkest thou he may be? Is he bound hither?"

"'Tis a herald," replied the page ; "and he rides fast! He raises the dust on every side of him. No doubt he bears pressing intelligence."

"Now heaven forbid!" thought the archbishop ; "art thou sure that he is a herald?" he added aloud ; "look again, boy, perhaps he is a falconer riding forth for sport this fine morning."

"No—it is a herald," repeated the page ; "I know him by his banner, and by the device on his shield."

The horseman had by this time approached near enough for the archbishop himself to be convinced that it was as the boy had said. Dismissing the page, he retreated into his comfortable arm-chair, and summoned fathers Ambrose and Eusebius to his presence.

A blast upon the trumpet announced that the messenger

was at the gate; and the page entering, informed him that the *Sieur Robert de Robaulx* desired speech of his lordship.

"Let him enter," said the archbishop with a sigh, which was transformed into something like a gleam of satisfaction on the arrival of the two advisers whom he had summoned to his councils. Father Eusebius was a weak looking man, considerably under the middle size, but with an eye so bright and penetrating, and an intellectual expression of countenance so decided, that the most inattentive and uninterested observer could not fail to observe the great superiority of his mental over his physical powers. He had a high open forehead, of which the many wrinkles betokened either intense study or deep intrigue. It was easy to see that they were not caused by the weight of years, for the father was still considerably under forty.

The other monk, father Ambrose, was a burly and important-looking personage, with an intelligent and good-humoured face. He was possessed of less genius, but of more art than his companion,—of less wisdom, but of more cunning. The one seemed formed to carry triumphantly through any great scheme or lofty idea. The other seemed to be more fitted for the petty detail or the over-reaching manœuvre. The first would infallibly gain his objects by boldly cutting the Gordian knot of difficulty or danger. The other would untie the knot, should it cost him years to do it. Such were the persons who now entered the archbishop's study to aid him with their councils.

Both the monks bowed low before their superior, who returned the greeting with a gracious benediction.

The *Sieur de Robaulx*, on being ushered into the presence of the great ecclesiastical dignitary, fell on his knee and craved the blessing of the holy father; this being granted, he handed a slip of parchment, which he was charged by the burgesses of London, assembled in council, to deliver into his hands.

"What says the scroll?" said the archbishop, handing the parchment to father Eusebius; "read me the message of the good city of London."

The monk took the missive, and his eye sparkled with anger as he glanced rapidly over its contents. He then passed it to his companion.

"So," said Eusebius, "the magistrates of London are at fault. They had but little wisdom, I think, when they did not seize the disturbers of the peace of the city before they became too strong."

"How, now!" said the archbishop, "are the populace of

London still disposed to be turbulent? What has happened?"

"Only that William Longbeard, and ten thousand of his associates, are now assembled at St. Paul's. Fitzalwyne and the forces sent against them have been completely defeated, and many persons have been slain. The city is completely in the power of the seditious. Fitzalwyne himself escaped with great difficulty, and he requires aid in this emergency from holy church and your lordship."

"And what is to be done?" said the archbishop. "Where is the Earl of Moreton and his men? can they not rid the city of this Longbeard?"

"The flower of our chivalry have left their bones in the Holy Land," returned Eusebius, "and we must send aid to the city, unless we wish it to be destroyed."

"Let the serfs of the monastery be armed," said the archbishop; "let the vassals of the church be sent immediately; but where is the Earl of Moreton?"

This question seemed to be repeated to the herald, who replied that the earl had been sent to, when the disturbances first appeared to grow serious, but that he did not know the result.

"Then Fitzalwyne must defend the city himself," replied the archbishop. "The Earl of Moreton, as soon as he knows what has happened, will help him, no doubt. If the populace of London are in the mood to destroy, and cannot be stayed until I send reinforcements, then is London in a bad predicament indeed."

"Something must be done," said Eusebius. "It cannot be suffered that the chief city of this kingdom should be ruled by a mob. What will our lord the king say, when he hears this?—that we are poor craven-hearted souls, every one of us."

"What is thy opinion, father Ambrose?" said the archbishop.

"That your grace should summon the mayor of London to attend you at Westminster, and answer for his negligence in not better looking after the peace of the city which he is entrusted to govern," replied Ambrose; "and in the next place, let this Longbeard, who is the fomentor and leader of rebellion, be summoned also to answer for his conduct."

"Do not summon him, but take him," said Eusebius, "and the land may be rid of him."

"That would not be easy," said Ambrose. "You may retire," he added, seeing that De Robaulx still lingered in the room. The herald withdrew accordingly, and the three engaged in earnest conversation for some minutes. "I know Fitzosbert well, and the populace of London whom he governs,"

continued Ambrose. "Violent though they be, they live in fear of the displeasure of the church. Let him be summoned to appear before the regents, under pain of excommunication. If he appear, we have him in our power. If he refuse, then is he excommunicated; and the populace that once loved him, will forsake him."

"Alack!" said the archbishop, shaking his head; "I fear me the church has lost its power in this unhappy realm of England. Things have ever gone wrong here since the murder of that pious martyr, my holy predecessor."

"No," said Eusebius, proudly; "that deed has been avenged. The voice of the church is more potent than ever. The advice of my brother is good."

Again a blast was sounded on the horn at the monastery gate; and again, after a short interval, the page entered and announced that the "Sieur de Warennnes, poursuivant and herald, from the city of London, demanded audience of his lordship."

"What can all this mean?" said the archbishop. "I think it will be hard for this new messenger to bring worse news than the last; and one follows so fast on the heels of the other, that we have no breathing time. Out upon those loons of London, that they cannot help themselves!"

The Sieur de Warennnes now entered, his face begrimed with the dust and sweat of hard riding.

"The greeting of the mayor and burgesses of London, in council assembled, to my lord archbishop and the holy fathers here present. Thirty of the citizens, and as many of the rebels under William Longbeard, have been slain, and the populace are now masters of the city, and have set fire to Fitzalwyne's house in the Lombards."

Father Eusebius turned pale.

"What craven hearts these fat London burgesses are! There is no virtue in the knaves, or they would look after their own safety like men, without burthening us with their complaints: Out upon them! They are as bad as babes, that fly to their mother's aprons for protection, if a dog but barks at them."

"Let their city burn," said the archbishop; "and if it does, let Fitzalwyne answer it with his head. He is not fit to be mayor of London if he have no more valour than this."

"No; the cowardly hound!" said Eusebius, striking his hand vehemently on the table. "And I will, if it be your lordship's pleasure, bear to him your command, that he resign his trust to some one more worthy to hold it. But in the meantime something should be done. How shall we answer

to our lord the king, if we suffer his capital city to be destroyed?"

"I cannot tell," replied the archbishop, in great perplexity, and looking from one to the other. "Here am I, fifty-five miles from London, with but a few hundred men-at-arms at my disposal—and all the mischief is perhaps done. Surely these burgesses make their condition worse than it is; and surely, if their extremity were so great, they might have sent to the Earl of Moreton, at Westminster, and not to me. I am the administrator of the law—and not a soldier."

And the archbishop, perspiring with the exertion of this unusually long speech, wiped the large drops of perspiration from his capacious brow, and fanned his face with his handkerchief, as he leaned back in his arm-chair.

"I will proceed to London," said Eusebius, "without an hour's delay; and will bear the summons of your grace to this formidable Longbeard, who seems to have frightened the weak burghers of London out of their senses."

A third blast at the gate announced another messenger, and the Sieur de Jointry, herald and poursuivant, dismounting from his foam-covered steed, was ushered into the presence of the archbishop, and bore the greetings of the mayor of London, and that all danger was over for the present. That the mob seemed to be satisfied with the burning of one house, and were retiring peaceably to their homes, but that the citizens still implored the aid of the regents of the kingdom and the lord high justiciary.

"The end of it must be that I must go to London," said the archbishop, turning to the two fathers, "to consult with the queen and the Earl of Moreton. I will make ready to-morrow, and father Ambrose shall accompany me. Thou, father Eusebius, shall go first and bear our summons to Longbeard."

"I will go immediately," said Eusebius. "I have few preparations to make, and the three heralds can accompany me. They will be convoy enough for a poor son of the church. Retire," he added, turning to the heralds, "and await me for an hour—there is both ale and wine in the cellars of our house, and beef in our larder. In one hour I will be ready to start."

The eyes of the archbishop glowed with something like satisfaction as he saw them take their departure; and the necessary documents being made out and signed, he at once took his leave of Eusebius. Father Ambrose remained behind.

"Play a game with me," he said, when they were alone;

and he opened his chess-board as he spoke; "and let us think no more on these London cowards and rebels till the morrow;—Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

Father Ambrose assented. He was one of those men who govern by seeming to yield, and who owed no little of the influence he possessed over his superior's mind, to his obsequiousness at the chess-board.

Leaving them to their game, let us accompany the heralds to another and very important part of the archiepiscopal abode—the kitchen. It was a large and lofty room; the fire-place alone, and the chimney-corner, being almost as spacious as many of our drawing-rooms in the present day. A bright wood fire was burning in this wide nook, before which was roasting an immense piece of beef, besides some very dainty accessories to the monastic dinner—such as pigeons, ducks, geese, and a great variety of game. A fat friar, who was invested with the responsible and important dignity of chief cook, was superintending the process, apparently with much satisfaction to himself; but occasionally leaving his cookery for a few minutes to converse with the heralds, who were seated in a corner, busily engaged with the succulent meats which the hospitable monks had provided for their refreshment. From the rafters and cross-beams, and amid the smoke of the high chimney, hung a great number of hams. On each side of the large fire-place was a stone bench, capable of accommodating half-a-dozen persons, and on one of which was seated an old man, half-mendicant, half minstrel, who was also busily employed in masticating the good cheer set before him by the orders of the archbishop.

The fat friar administered a kick to the posteriors of a little urchin who was dozing by the fire.

"Arouse, thee, thou idle pup, and attend to the roast for a few minutes. If I find thee careless enough to let it burn, I'll pull thy lazy ears till they're as long as the spit!" at the same time pointing to a spit of portentous length, on which the meat was suspended. The urchin involuntarily clapped his hand to the threatened member, as if to assure himself that it was still of the orthodox dimensions and no more, and then began to attend to his task with an assiduity of which he was at most times guiltless. The friar proceeded to the corner where the heralds were seated, and helped himself to a hornful of the good ale which stood on a table before them in an immense tankard of stone.

"My service to you, my children," said the holy man, with a paternal air; "and how strong did you say the rebels

were? Sancta Maria! Ten thousand men! But I hope you have conquered them?"

"As for that," replied De Warennes, "I think the rascals will soon be put down. The populace are mere cowards after all. Added to that, they are as changeable as the wind. A little priestly persuasion, artfully managed, would make Longbeard as much hated as he is beloved."

"Ay, ay, father Eusebius is no fool at persuasion," said the friar; "and if he is to return with you, as you say, I wager my reputation that he will find means to lessen his popularity."

"Curse his popularity!" said De Warennes. "Why don't they burn him for murder and witchcraft?"

"Hush!" said the friar, "I will absolve you from that oath; but you must speak temperately."

"Temperately!" retorted De Warennes; "would you speak temperately if your brother had been slain? Poor fellow! not in glorious warfare, but in a combat with clowns; knocked on the head, mayhap by a butcher, an' he were no better than an ox! By St. Peter! if ever Longbeard crosses my path, I'll be revenged on him!"

"Was thy brother among the slain, then?" inquired De Robaulx.

"Why I thought all London knew it," said De Warennes. "As pretty a wife as ever was wed has been left a widow, and as beautiful a boy as ever the sun shone on has been left an orphan. It was found no easy matter to separate her from the corpse; she clung to it as if it had been still living, and swore, poor soul, she would be buried with it."

At this period of the conversation, a sumpter mule, simply and unostentatiously caparisoned, was led to the monastery gate, and it was announced that father Eusebius was ready. The heralds, after thanking the holy cook for his hospitality, arose to look after their steeds; and the procession being soon ready, it wound slowly from the gate, and taking the direction of London, was soon out of sight.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Yes! he is gone
That in the morning promised many years !”

SHIRLEY.

“ Mark my greeting well,
Thou art a traitor and a miscreant !”

SHAKESPEARE.

THE morning sun shone brightly over the yellow furze bushes and dark heather of Blackheath, when several men and women were observed to enter a low and miserable hut, which was the only habitation visible as far as the eye could reach over the dark expanse, to which our forefathers have not unaptly given the name of Blackheath. Then, as now, a road, which was as much frequented as any other in the kingdom, wound over the woody heights of Shooter's Hill. Hundreds of pilgrims were at times to be seen passing along this road, bare-headed and bare-footed, to the shrine of our Lady of Canterbury; but this morning there was no such procession to be seen. The house already alluded to stood by the roadside at the commencement of the heath, and from its outward appearance seemed to belong to a blacksmith. A large horse-shoe was affixed over the door, and, in an out-house adjoining, several articles of rusty iron were lying scattered on the ground. There was also a forge, an anvil, and various other implements and appliances of the trade.

When, in the full bustle of work and activity, when the bright flames are blazing, the loud bellows roaring, and the heavy hammer resounding upon the anvil, a blacksmith's shop seems the very abode of cheerfulness and lusty labour. But when the embers are sparkless, the ponderous hammer silent, and the industrious artizan departed, there is no place which presents a more gloomy and melancholy appearance. Such was the case here. It was an hour at which the labourer should have been at his work,—it was the hour of toil and exertion,—but all was silent and deserted. In the hut a different scene presented itself. The room, the only one which it contained, was low and dark. Two orifices, covered with slight frames of wicker-work, served, instead of windows, to admit the light. On a bed of straw, at the further end of this apartment, was extended the figure of a man, dressed in the long white habiliments of the dead. The corpse had been a tall and strong man, for the muscular arms looked formidable even in death; and the face, with all its haggardness, preserved a ferocious and forbidding aspect.

Two or three females were seated beside it on the ground. One of them was a woman of upwards of forty; her long hair fell down in confusion over her yellow neck; her bony elbows rested on her knee, while her lank and skinny hands supported her head. In this position she sate, silent, although her lips kept moving. Her two companions, however, were loud in their lamentations, and did not cease to shriek and wail over the poor heap of mortality which was extended before them. The room was full of men, and most of them were armed, some with bludgeons, and others with old swords or pikes. In the centre was a priest, around whom had gathered seven or eight individuals. The figure of one of these was too remarkable to be mistaken. The deformed shape,—the intelligent and melancholy face,—the long brown hair, parted in the middle of the forehead, and the still longer beard which hung down upon his breast, sufficiently indicated William Fitzosbert, the Hunchback of London. Mingling in the group was also the slim and lank figure of a well-known man among the disaffected, Robert Brewer, peering around him with small and cunning eye, his thin lips moving all the while, and his whole appearance wearing an expression of coolness and malice. A tall, brawny, but handsome man, no other than Bryan Fitzosbert, the brother of William Longbeard, also mingled in the group, and he and the priest had just finished a long and animated discussion. The party were preparing to render the last tribute of respect to the body of their companion, Marichal, who had been slain in the late riots in London, and whose corpse was now extended before them. A rude coffin was placed at the foot of the pallet of straw on which the dead man lay. Two of the company, artizans, (as indeed they were all, with the exception of Longbeard, the priest, and Bryan Fitzosbert,) soon placed the body into its case; and the lid having been fastened down, amid the lamentations of the women, the procession prepared to set out.

“The ground is holy where we must inter him,” said the priest, “for there on his pilgrimage once rested the pious St. Edward the Confessor. In that hallowed spot have we dug him a grave,—and there shall repose the bones of our companion.”

Four men now took the coffin upon their shoulders. The woman, already mentioned, who was the widow of the deceased, followed first as chief mourner, leading by the hand a lad of about fourteen, her son. Behind them came the two other women, then the priest, then Longbeard, then

Bryan Fitzosbert, Le Brewer, and the rest. In this order the procession came slowly from the door of the hut, and proceeded in the direction of the place where the village of Lewisham now stands, towards a small mound of earth, surmounted by a cross. Underneath was the grave where the mortal remains of the discontented blacksmith were to be deposited.

A funeral, performed by day, loses half its solemnity,—night is the fitting time to restore the body to its mother earth. The sun's eye is too garish to look down upon the solemn ceremony: the open grave looks too light and too warm,—nature seems too cheerful, and the birds sing too merrily for the due performance of the awe-inspiring duty. The morning fixed upon for the interment of Marichal was more than usually cheerful;—nature was all teeming with life and joy; and, as the mourners passed over the heath, treading the furze and the wild thyme, a pleasant and refreshing odour from the bruised flowers came floating around them. Slowly and sadly the funeral train marched on,—the coffin was lowered into the earth, the service for the dead was repeated by the priest, father Anselmus, and the grave was then speedily closed, and a mound of earth raised over the spot. For a few moments there was a solemn silence in the assembly,—not a word was spoken, and the men looked into each other's faces inquiringly. Amid this silence Longbeard stepped forward, and, drawing a sword from under his cloak, drove it into the ground, till it stood before them the symbol of the cross. Lifting his hands to heaven, he began an address to his partizans, in a low voice, which he gradually raised to a high and commanding tone. He was listened to with the deepest attention. His auditors hung upon his eloquent words, as he expatiated on the wrongs they had endured, and the insults they had too patiently brooked. He pointed out to them the degradation of him who would calmly endure oppression, the worthlessness of the limb that would not revolt at its fetters, and the utter meanness of him who would not shed his heart's blood in the cause of freedom. When he saw that he had sufficiently worked upon them,—when he noted their flashing eyes and their quivering lips, he fell on his knees upon the ground, and swore that he would never, as long as life lasted, cease to pursue, with his hatred and his vengeance, the proud Normans who oppressed the Saxons of England. The throng, as if animated by the same spirit, and moulded to the will of him who had addressed them, all knelt down beside the newly covered grave of their

companion, and, uncovering their heads, swore to dedicate their lives to free the race of Saxons from the thralldom of the foreigner.

The triumph of Longbeard was complete; he saw that the passions of his adherents were a sea over which he was the ruler, and over which his potent voice could send forth the tempest or withdraw it at his will. Their oath taken, the men rose up, and engaged in earnest conversation one with the other.

"Yonder they come, the proud hounds!" said one of the company, directing the attention of the rest to three men who came riding along at some distance over the heath. "Yonder they come from hawking, or hunting, or grinding down the poor. Vengeance upon them! Vengeance!"

"No! let them pass!" said Longbeard, "we meddle not with the few, but with the many,—we are not murderers."

"They are approaching towards us," said Le Brewer; "two of them seem to be men at arms."

"And what if they are?" said Longbeard; "here we will wait their coming."

"I know them," observed Bryan Fitzosbert, looking towards the horsemen, who were evidently making for the group; "I know them; and doubtless, we are the very men they seek."

"We will spare them the trouble of seeking us," returned Longbeard. "If they come to us for evil, on their heads be the consequence. Let us proceed towards them."

"They are coming towards us," said Bryan; "since you will not avoid them, let us await them here, on the grave of our companion."

By this time the horsemen had approached sufficiently near to afford Fitzosbert, and the rest, a fair view of their persons and appearance. Two of the men were dressed in the garb of the heralds of those days; the other was a churchman, mounted on a sumpter mule. The heralds were De Robaulx and De Warenes; the priest was father Eusebius. They had journeyed so far on their mission to London, when the monk's attention was directed to the group at Marichal's funeral, whose singular appearance and gestures he was somewhat at a loss to account for. De Robaulx, as soon as they came near enough, recognised at once the form of Longbeard, who, standing upon the mound of earth, overtopped at that instant his taller companions. Having communicated this discovery to Warenes, who, on his part, was not slow in recognising the well-known figure of the Longbeard, he informed Eusebius of the circumstance.

"Then spur on your horses, my children," said the priest;

"I will at once deliver my message to that firebrand of treason."

"With all due respect to yourself, and deference to your superior judgment, holy father," said De Robaulx, "that would not be prudent. There are some forty of the rebels, and we are but three."

"Were they thousands," returned the priest, raising himself in his saddle as he spoke, "the church, whose servant, and whose representative I am, would lead me without fear, and without scathe among them. If you are afraid, you may remain behind, and I will go alone into the midst of them."

"Forgive us," returned the heralds; "we are ready to accompany you."

"Then, spur on your horses, and follow me!" said the churchman, and in a few minutes they were in the midst of the group.

The monk and Longbeard had met before; and the glances they now interchanged were glances of mutual defiance.

"Recreant, and unworthy son of a church which thou disgracest, what dost thou here?" said the angry priest, first addressing himself to Anselmus, whose cheek blanched, and whose eye trembled before the stern glance of his interrogator.

"The sacred offices of the church have alone brought me here," returned the humbled monk. "See, there is a grave, your mule is trampling over it."

Eusebius immediately dismounted, and led the animal from its position over the grave of Marichal; and this slight mark of respect calmed in a small degree the exasperation which had been gathering around him.

"And you, my children," continued Eusebius, addressing the throng by whom he was surrounded, "you have been brought hither seemingly for a holy purpose, and it is now fitting that you should retire. If by word or by deed you have offended—if you have nourished unholy and seditious thoughts during the time that you have been gathered together, repent of the evil, and the saints will intercede for remission. Depart now in peace and abstain from sedition. If you have any wrongs, they shall be redressed. The church loves all her children too well to suffer them to be oppressed if she knows it. And you, William Fitzosbert," he continued, turning to Longbeard, "why do you lead these men astray? Why are they here armed and in such numbers?"

"Because they have many enemies, and it is unsafe for them to go abroad without means of defence," returned Fitzosbert; "and because they are both ready and willing to

seize the occasion, whenever it offers, to right the wrongs they suffer, whether caused by haughty layman or still haughtier priest."

The eye of Eusebius glanced with anger.

"Blasphemer! would you say the church has wronged you? Hear him, my children, hear your leader, and wonder that heaven in its wrath does not strike him to the earth! But," he continued, relapsing into a milder tone, "why not state your wrongs fairly before the proper tribunal? If your wrongs prove other than imaginary, I promise you they shall be redressed."

"We have long implored redress. We have been the most humble of suppliants," replied Longbeard. "We have tried every means, and all have failed."

"Have you yourself not much wrong to answer for?" continued the priest, scowling with indignation at the firm features and untroubled mien of Longbeard; "have you no wrong on your own head? no murders to answer for? no massacres that lie at your door, and call to heaven for vengeance? William Fitzosbert, I summon you," he added, stretching forth his right arm in an attitude of authority, "in the name of the most Holy Trinity—in the name of that holy and all potent church, which has power on earth and in heaven to loose and to unloose, and under pain of excommunication and eternal perdition, to appear within three days before the lord high justiciary of this realm, and the queen co-regent, at Westminster, there to answer for your misdeeds!"

"To you I owe no allegiance," returned Fitzosbert, undauntedly; "show me your authority!"

"Refuse submission, if you dare," replied the priest, "and forthwith the church will reject you from her pale. And now here is my authority, since you must needs see it," he continued, drawing a parchment from his bosom, and handing it to Anselmus.

The monk glanced his eye rapidly over the document, and his already pale cheek grew paler still as he perceived his own name in conjunction with Longbeard's. He was no stranger to the potency of the denunciations of the church, and knew full well that its commands it was impossible to disobey. They might defy kings and armies, but the church and its behests were not to be scorned with impunity. He and Longbeard were summoned, under the hand and seal of Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, lord high justiciary of the realm of England, and of Queen Eleanor, co-regent of

the kingdom, to appear at Westminster on the third day, under pain of excommunication.

"Nay, read the parchment out," said Eusebius, calculating on its effect upon the men around him; "read it, that all here may know the authority under which you are summoned."

Anselmus read it in a slow and faltering voice. Eusebius marked the expression of Longbeard's face, and he thought he could see the stern resolve giving way, in dread of the terrible maledictions of the church. He saw, also, that he had not miscalculated its effect upon the auditory. The vengeance of the church was denounced in the most awful terms upon Fitzosbert, if he refused obedience to its commands.

"Father, it is well," said Longbeard, when Anselmus, after having read the document, passed it for his inspection; "I will obey the mandate of the church without fear and without scruple. Secure in the justice of my cause, I will go before the regents. And now," he added, looking steadfastly at Eusebius, "farewell. I hope nothing from your justice, and I defy your malice."

CHAPTER VII.

"He came before the chiefs.—As roll the troubled clouds round a meteor of night, so gathered his tribe around him!"—OSSIAN.

"Fie, sirrah!

The evil that thou causest to be done,

That is thy means to live!"

Measure for Measure.

At length the day arrived, appointed by the co-regents of the kingdom, to hear the complaint of the good city of London against William Longbeard. It was a day looked forward to with great anxiety by many, and with great apprehension by many more. Perhaps the two most anxious for its arrival, were Fitzalwyne, the mayor of London, and Longbeard himself. They both expected to make it a day of triumph. The first expected to crush one enemy, but the latter expected to gain a victory over a thousand. Archbishop Hubert had, after a fatiguing journey, arrived safely at Westminster, where he was received with all due honours by the Queen Eleanor and her son, the Earl of Moreton, afterwards King John. At the old and cumbrous bridge of London,—with its gate at Southwark, surmounted by half a dozen human heads upon pikes, a number of gay

barges were stationed, ready to receive the municipal functionaries who were about to proceed in state to Westminster by water. The procession was expected to be more than usually magnificent, and a crowd had in consequence collected to witness the pageant. The crowd, however, was not so great as might have been looked for on such an occasion; and the inquietude visible in the countenances of most of them, betokened that the day might yet bring forth events of a nature deeply to affect the future repose and welfare of the city.

The procession was to start at noon, and it yet wanted more than half an hour of the appointed time.

"The city seems unusually empty," said a man in the centre of a group, which had met near the Dour, or Dow, gate, to catch a glimpse of the show; "what can have become of all the populace?"

"It's not easy to say where they are all gone to," replied one of the bystanders, who, by his garb, appeared to be of the class of respectable shopkeepers. "I only know that I saw hundreds of them leaving the city in gangs,—some out of one gate, and some out of another."

"I can vouch for the truth of that," said a third. "Longbeard will re-enter with a goodly company behind him, or I'm no true man."

"Very likely," said the first speaker; "the knave cannot go to mass without a thousand followers at his heels."

"And therein he shows his wisdom," replied another. "when there are so many lying in wait to attack him unprepared."

"'Tis said he will be excommunicated."

"What! for merely asserting the rights of his countrymen?" said the man who had first spoken, and who seemed to be a well-wisher to, if not a partizan of, Fitzosbert.

"Ay; thou art bitten by his doctrine," was the reply "but thou canst find no excuse for the recent slaughter, for the destruction of property, and for the loss of innocent life which he has occasioned."

"The city alone is to blame," replied the friend of Longbeard; "did not Fitzalwyne begin the attack upon unoffending men at Paul's Cross?"

"But was not the peace of the city menaced? Did no Longbeard and his mob assemble to overawe the authorities?"

"Did they not deserve to be overawed?" rejoined the man "besides, Longbeard only wished to tell the poor people how much they were oppressed; and even you, that are so ready

to speak ill of him, is it not for your good that he is acting? Are you not Saxons? do you not feel the Norman chains? do you not wince under their lash? do they not trample upon you?"

"No, they do not," replied the first speaker. "Did not King Richard, before his departure grant us many privileges? Besides, if we have wrongs, Longbeard is not the man whom we ought to select to remedy them. What does he care for the rights or the wrongs of the people? It is power that he wishes, and we all see how he uses it."

"He only seeks power for the sake of justice; and by St. Paul!" said the man, shaking his fist in the air, and laughing fiercely; "he is very likely to get it and revenge too, and that speedily!"

"Now our Lady forbid!" said the first speaker; "we citizens desire peace, we have nothing to do with revenge."

"The sleek pig sleeps in the mire, but the persecuted wolf will have blood!" muttered the man with a scowl of contempt, as he turned on his heel and left the group.

The power of Longbeard had, indeed, increased, and seemed likely to increase still more, as the man had said. The city was completely in his power, and had he but uttered the word, it would have been given up to the vengeance of the Saxons, for which his partisans were desirous enough. He had as yet made no other use of his power, than to forbid the payment of the tallage, and some other oppressive taxes, which had first of all given fuel to the flame of discontent. The city was placed in a most critical dilemma, and it was necessary to proceed (and the authorities knew it,) with the greatest caution, lest any false stroke of policy should have still more increased the power which it was their object to diminish. The wisest plan which could perhaps have been adopted, was that which had been resorted to by father Eusebius. The power of the church was then wondrous, and not to be braved with impunity by the most formidable. The church, however, was prudent, and would not, without due deliberation, launch its anathema at the head of one who, in a moment of exasperation, might set loose a hundred thousand angry, oppressed, and ignorant men to pillage and destroy. Father Eusebius, who was a man of sound sense, knew that Longbeard had some reason on his side, and was desirous, by a few concessions, of weakening his cause by depriving it of its chief support—justice. He was not without hopes, however, that Fitzosbert might reject the concessions which would be doled out to him, and thus excuse in some degree the severity of which he would then counsel the adoption.

Such was the state of things on the morning appointed for the appearance of Longbeard before the co-regents at Westminster. The procession of the authorities of the city was not yet ready to start, and a breakfast was laid out in the house of Fitzalwyne for the refreshment of his municipal brethren. The dialogue kept up at long intervals between each man and his nearest neighbour, was concise and laconic, and the meal was eaten in comparative silence. Each individual seemed to be brooding over some train of thought, which a more lengthened conversation would have disturbed. The silence grew at length embarrassing, and was first broken by Fitzalwyne addressing himself to a rich burgher and alderman, named Childe.

"You seem gloomy, my friend," said he; "every one looks so melancholy, it would seem that we were to be the accused and not the accusers!"

"Serious, but not gloomy," replied the alderman. "I have been debating whether or no it would be better that I should accompany you on this ill-advised procession. Oh! it galls me to the heart to think that you should be so tame!"

"Tame!" replied Fitzalwyne. "How?"

"Do you not call it tame and unworthy of your manhood to go like children with a whining tale, to complain that this man disturbs you? There is no valour in London, or you would have cut off, ere now, without other aid than your own right hands, the diseased and polluted limb which infects the city."

"But," said Fitzalwyne, "if the arm of the secular authority has been too feeble to restore the tranquillity of the city, are we to be debarred from obtaining the assistance of the ecclesiastical arm, the stronger and more effectual of the two?"

"'Tis unmanly to obtain that from the curse of a priest which ought to be won by the sword of a soldier," said the alderman.

"Not at all," replied another burgess, named Baldwin. "In my opinion, our present policy is the wisest we could pursue. And you, you must go with us."

"Not I, by the cross!" said the alderman; "'twould be useless. Are you so simple as to expect that Longbeard will come tamely at your summons, and hear his condemnation? Not he."

"He dares not refuse."

"We shall see," rejoined Childe; "in the meantime, proceed you, where your plans lead you. I will not make one of you."

"Our brother is free to act as he pleases," said Fitzalwyne, looking round to the company. "But in every case the doom of the rebel is sealed."

A blast from the trumpets of the men-at-arms of the city, who were to accompany the cortège to Westminster, at this instant announced that all was ready for their departure. The guests immediately rose and proceeded to the bridge-stairs, where the gay barges were stationed to receive them. Each barge was manned by six rowers, and each, besides, contained a standard bearer, who continued waving in his hand the banner of the city, whilst a strain of martial music struck up in honour of the chief magistrate.

It was a glorious day, and the sun looked down brightly upon the show. The genial influence of the weather, however, seemed to have lost its power to cheer the spirits of man. A gloomy sadness, in spite both of the gay pageant and the gayer weather, pervaded the city, which, although it was mid-day, seemed almost as silent as at the hour of dawn. The barges and their passengers, uncheered by the crowd, proceeded slowly up the broad bosom of the Thames, which was at that time the safest as well as the pleasantest thoroughfare to the "palatial city."

Close to the spot where now stands Westminster Hall and the houses of the British legislature, stood the palace of the kings of England. The large saloon of audience was decorated with great splendour, for the occasion of the meeting in solemn council of the three co-regents of the kingdom. At the extremity of the saloon, and elevated a few feet above the floor, were placed three richly ornamented chairs, or thrones, covered with velvet and cloth of gold, for the representatives of majesty. A rich light streamed through the oriel window of the hall, and fell with a beautiful and picturesque effect upon the dazzling robes of white and azure worn by Queen Eleanor, who occupied the middle chair. At her right sat the portly and placid Archbishop of Canterbury and Rouen, lord high justiciary of the kingdom. On her left sat the king's brother, the young Earl of Moreton. These three personages all looked upon the approaching scene with very different feelings. The queen, who was no other than the haughty and revengeful dame, so well known in the romantic annals of England, as having caused the death of Rosamond, her fairer and gentler rival in the affections of her spouse, King Henry the Second, was, perhaps, more inclined than either of her associates in the regency to do justice, and no more, between the capital city on one side, and the powerful and dangerous Fitzosbert on the other.

She knew that her Saxon subjects had too often been hardly dealt with; and although she was much prejudiced against Longbeard, as all the Normans were, she was desirous, if possible, to redress the real and proved grievances of which he might complain, and punish him at the same time for the disorders and bloodshed which she thought he had occasioned. The lord high justiciary, whose sluggish nature had been roused into unwonted but effectual energy, by the instigations of his more powerful-minded advisers, fathers Ambrose and Eusebius, was desirous at one blow to crush the insurrection. As a contemplative student, when worried by the constant whizzing of a wasp about his nose, throws down his favourite volume in anger, to destroy the troublesome insect that distracts his attention from the musings of song, or the speculations of philosophy, so the good Hubert, anxious only for repose, would at one fell blow have trodden down Longbeard, and then hied home to his books and his chess-board, without thinking further of the matter. The Earl of Moreton, had, however, more complicated motives for the conduct which he that day pursued. His brother, Cœur de Lion, had been long absent—he was a captive, and childless—power was divided, and the kingdom was distracted. Under these circumstances, was the heir of England to be idle? He had long nourished the plan of seizing upon the vacant throne, and for this purpose his schemes were many and deep-laid. He continually spread abroad, by means of his friends and adherents, rumours of the death of Richard and thus more prominently directed the attention of the people to himself. The flower of the Norman nobility were absent in the Holy Land, and thus the Saxons would naturally become his main reliance in any attempt which he might be desirous of putting into execution. His brother owing to his chivalrous character, so much in unison with that of his barons, was much beloved by them. The Saxons however, had received fewer benefits at his hand, and were not so well affected towards him. John, accordingly, endeavoured to ingratiate himself with the Saxon chiefs and people and had already held out to them the prospect of many privileges, immediately that he should be called to the throne. Hence, in the present conjuncture, he was desirous to deal leniently with Longbeard, whose insurrection, as we have seen, was of a nature entirely Saxon. The Earl of Moreton was averse to have the popular leader laid under the withering and paralyzing ban of the Church, and had exerted all his influence to prevent such a consummation.

We have hitherto seen Longbeard alone at the head of thi

powerful rising, or assisted only by men of the lowest classes. Higher agencies were however at work, and within the last few days, messengers had arrived in London, with offers of money and assistance from many of the most powerful Saxon chieftains in the provinces, who began to see, that, if wisely fostered, the present discontents might be attended with the most favourable results to their oppressed race. Everything in the then conjunction of public affairs seemed favourable to the development of the fondly-cherished plan for the re-establishment of Saxon supremacy. The absence of Richard and the Norman barons, the more than suspected designs of the Earl of Moreton, and the increasing power of Longbeard, and his adherents, were all favourable to an attempt of the kind. The aid of Bryan Fitzosbert, a man of no small power and influence, was also opportune; he was with all his heart and soul devoted to the cause, and capable of furthering it in an eminent degree.

Around the co-regents were stationed fathers Eusebius and Ambrose, the bishop of London, the abbot of Westminster, with several knights of the train of the Earl of Moreton, and the royal flag of England waved proudly over the royal and noble group, who were deliberating with such different feelings and motives on the emergencies of the state. A strain of music was struck up on the outside of the building, and immediately afterwards a page entered to announce the arrival of the mayor and burghesses of London, to crave an audience, on matters of importance, of the high and puissant regents of the kingdom. Assent being given, clothed in his municipal robes, and bearing the sword of office, entered the tall and martial figure of Fitzalwyne, first mayor of London, raised to that dignity as a mark of his especial favour, by King Richard, on the day of his coronation. After him came the sheriffs, aldermen, common-councilmen, and a deputation of the merchants and traders of the city. Hardly had they made their obeisances to the royal group, when the page again entered, to notify the arrival of another burghess of the city, who demanded instant admittance, in the most imperative tone.

"And who is the burghess, that he came not with you?" said the queen, addressing Fitzalwyne.

"I am ignorant, your grace," replied the mayor, "and know not his name or business."

At this instant a struggle was heard at the door, and a tall man, whose grim face was covered with dust and perspiration, forced his way into the apartment. The eyes of all were directed towards the new comer, and some of the men-at-

arms were about to seize him, when a simultaneous sign from the Earl of Moreton and Fitzalwyne, commanded them to desist.

"Why, how now, worthy burgess?" said the Earl of Moreton, who recognised the wealthiest jeweller of London; "what causes Robert Childe to come upon us thus uncere- moniously?"

"Evil news does not consider ceremony," replied the burgess. "I crave your pardon for my apparent rudeness; zeal will, perhaps, be allowed to plead in excuse for want of courtesy."

"Of a surety it will," said the queen. "But you spoke of evil news, and your appearance would indeed indicate it."

"You are but feebly guarded," said the burgess, "and danger is approaching. Where are your men-at-arms?"

"There are three hundred archers at the gate," replied the Earl of Moreton.

"They are not sufficient," interrupted Childe: "in a few minutes the rebels will be here; there are at least fifty thousand of them coming to burn and to destroy. However, let me command your archers. Hark to their tramp!" he continued, lifting his arm, and pointing to the street.

The queen turned pale, and the archbishop began to look uncomfortable. A dead silence pervaded the assembly. A low, long, heavy tramp was distinctly audible, increasing in intensity every second. The blood of all present seemed for a moment to stagnate; their breathing was hushed, as loud, measured, and awful, the tramp of the multitude sounded upon their ears. Not a whisper was heard either without or within. The populace neither shouted nor spoke, but pressed onward in numbers as yet unknown to the council. In an instant afterwards, the men-at-arms were stationed at every avenue and window of the palace, their bows bent, and their swords drawn to repel the invaders, for such they seemed. The Earl of Moreton and Robert Childe, with several of the knights, descended to the principal door, where orders were given to the archers to keep themselves in readiness, but by no means to commence the attack. Gradually the whole space around and near about was filled with a dense mass of human beings. Down all the neighbouring streets, as far as the eye could reach, the crowd came pouring on in overwhelming numbers. The queen stepped from the throne, and proceeded to the window, followed by the archbishop and the other ecclesiastics.

"Holy mother of God!" she exclaimed, in alarm, "protect

and save us!—there are myriads of them! To arms, gentlemen!—to arms!”

“Be not alarmed, madam,” said father Eusebius, calmly, “even in this conjuncture the voice of the church shall triumph.”

“What is to be done, my children?” said the archbishop, turning to the two fathers;—“what is your counsel?”

“To keep them in play for a time,” said Eusebius. “Will your grace step on to the balcony with me?” he continued, turning to the queen; “your presence will do much.”

“If my presence will be useful,” said the queen, “I will go. Come!” she continued, throwing open the window with a firm hand, while her pale face betrayed her anxiety.

She stepped out, followed by father Eusebius. Fitzalwyne was about to do the same, but was motioned back by the priest, who knew that his presence, as yet, could do no good, but might do evil. No sooner did the crowd catch a glimpse of the white robes and proud majestic countenance of the queen, than they raised a shout, which made her fancy that the balcony was trembling beneath her feet. The whole edifice seemed to shake with the repercussion. Ere the shout had totally subsided, it arose again with redoubled vehemence, causing, by its intensity, the blood to tingle in the cheeks of the listeners. The queen saw the mighty mass waving to and fro; but though her head turned giddy, she did not lose her presence of mind, but bowed to the throng with less haughtiness than was her wont in public.

“Is that Longbeard?” said the archbishop to Eusebius, pointing, at the same time, to a man of small stature, who was evidently the leader of the mob, and who being mounted upon a war-horse, by this means overtopped the surrounding multitude.

“Yes, that is Longbeard,” replied the father; and the eyes of the queen were, at the same instant, directed to the remarkable individual who was the occasion of the present scene. Eleanor regarded with minute, although necessarily hasty, curiosity the redoubtable Saxon, of whom she had heard such wondrous tales. His appearance, she thought, was well calculated to captivate the vulgar. The long flowing beard, from which he derived his name, hung down almost to the leathern belt which encircled his loins. His hair was carefully parted in the middle, falling down on each side of his face in luxuriant curls, leaving exposed, at the same time, his high and intellectual forehead. His eye sparkled with triumph, as he looked first at Eusebius, and then at the

immense multitude which surrounded him. When he saw the eyes of the queen bent, with curious scrutiny, towards him, he took off his cap, in which was a large black ostrich feather, the only article of finery in his attire, with studied and graceful courtesy, and saluted the mother of Cœur de Lion. The queen, with dignity, and, at the same time, with genuine courtesy, returned his salutation; and another long-continued shout rent the air. Father Eusebius impatiently waved his hand for silence, and seemed, by his actions and the expression on his countenance, as if he were desirous of addressing the crowd. Longbeard understood him, and turning round to the immense multitude, made a sign for silence, and the uproar immediately ceased.

"Friends and children!" said the priest, raising his clear and sonorous voice to its loudest pitch, and stretching forth his hands with a gesture of mingled entreaty and authority, 'what brings you hither in such threatening numbers? Is this the way that you would plead your cause? If you wish the laws respected towards yourselves, you must begin by respecting them towards others. Shame on you, men of London! to come hither in a vain attempt to overawe the holy church, that hath summoned your leader, with no other design than to do justice to him and to you. Retire to your homes, and the anger of the church may yet be averted from you."

As the priest ceased, he looked round to note if there were any disposition among the multitude to obey his behest. Not a man moved; there was a dogged resolution in each face, which manifested their determination to remain with their leader.

"You, William Fitzosbert," continued Eusebius, "exert your authority over the people; entreat them to disperse, or upon your head be the responsibility of all the evil that may ensue."

Longbeard was about to reply, when Eleanor began to address the crowd.

"I know my people will be peaceable," said she, "and that each man will quietly retire to his own home, and his own occupation."

The crowd remained immoveable.

"We were summoned hither," said Longbeard, "and we are come."

"*Thou wert summoned,*" said Eusebius, "*but not these.*"

"They and I are one," returned Longbeard; "our cause is one, our complaint is one, and our determination is one. You cannot separate us."

Another shout was the commentary and echo of this

speech, and Longbeard smiled in triumph as it resounded first from those nearest, and was afterwards continued by those in the distance. Each peal of that shout was balm to his ambitious heart.

"Do you then fear that evil may ensue?" he continued, addressing the priest. "No; we are strong in justice, and can afford to be peaceable."

"If you are so inclined," replied Eusebius, "why this show of power? why do you come hither, threatening the lawful authorities of the realm?"

"We come not to threaten," replied Longbeard; "we would not have come unless we had been summoned. It was from your own lips, holy father, that I first heard the summons."

"Thou, and thou alone, wert summoned hither—it is thou, and not these good men of London, who hast offended the holy church, by causing riot and bloodshed, and disturbing the peace of all honest citizens."

The priest stopped short—impatience was imprinted on the face of the majority of his auditory, and a threatening murmur was rising around him.

"But," he continued in a milder tone, "the church is only anxious to do justice. Their graces, the regents, are willing to hear the grievances of which you complain; only it is not fitting that justice should be overawed."

"Then I will make my complaint in the face of this assembled multitude, who have been drawn hither by the sense of wrong. Friends and countrymen, listen while I plead your cause!"

"Not here," interrupted Eusebius; "enter the palace, where the burgesses of London may hear also. They have their complaint to make as well as you."

Loud cries and shouts of "No! no!" resounded from every mouth. "Do not enter alone, Longbeard!" cried one. "Don't trust them!" said another. "Let us all enter!" said a third.

Longbeard raised himself in his saddle, and turning towards the crowd, held up his hands as if he would address them. There was a deep silence immediately.

"Friends and countrymen," said he, "I will go and plead for you, and the Almighty Father of Justice will give my tongue eloquence in your behalf. You need not fear for my safety. Besides, you can stay here till I return. Will you not?"

Another loud shout from the multitude was the reply. Longbeard once more turned round to the queen and father Eusebius.

"I am ready," said he, "to attend you where you will. You will permit one of my friends to accompany me—one who has been more deeply wronged than even I?"

Father Eusebius was about to utter a negative, when Eleanor, who had hitherto been silent, turned to him, and expressed her wish that this proposal should not be refused. Then addressing Longbeard, she added,—

"The request is but reasonable, and the regents would be sorry to gainsay it. Choose, then, the men who shall accompany you."

Fitzosbert, raising his voice, then called to a stripling near him.

"Come hither, son of Marichal John—come hither, and let the remembrance of the blood of thy father give to thy young tongue the wisdom of age."

The boy stepped forward, led by his mother.

"Let me go, too," she exclaimed, in a shrill harsh voice; "his father was my husband, and I have wrongs as well as he."

"Thou shalt come, then," replied Longbeard, "and you too, Bryan Fitzosbert! Come and speak forth the complaints of the dwellers in the woods. We are the men of the town, and want you to speak for our brethren in the woods, who are deprived of the rights and customs of their forefathers. Stand forth!"

"I came but for that purpose," said Bryan, pressing more closely to the side of his brother; and the eyes of the queen and of father Eusebius were immediately directed with great curiosity towards a man, of whom both had heard so much, but who had hitherto been unobserved by them, although he was mounted not far from the principal personage of the crowd. The queen remarked that he was clothed in a uniform of black and green, and that scattered among the crowd were a vast number of strong fellows, all clothed in the same livery. She also remarked, what had escaped the notice of Eusebius, that these men were all armed. While, not without alarm, she was making these observations, Longbeard again spoke.

"I want yet another!" said he. "Let him come with me whose tongue is eloquent, and whose heart is bold. Is there any one among you, whom Norman oppression has galled to the soul? whose hard earnings have been wrung from him by Norman greediness? whose wife, or daughter, or sister, has been insulted or injured by a Norman?—any one who has been beaten by Norman cruelty as if he were no better than a dog? Is there among you no son of a poor widow, who has been robbed of her last mite by Norman avarice, or

bowed down into the grave before her time by the oppression accumulated upon the heads of her and her children?"

At each question a thousand voices shouted in reply.

"Are there, then, so many of you?" continued Longbeard, his face glowing with enthusiasm, and a ray of pleasure and excitement lighting up his intelligent and expressive eyes. "Are there, then, so many? You have, however, pleaded your own cause. I see in the face of the good queen-regent, that her heart inclines to justice, and that your voices have not been heard in vain."

All eyes were now turned towards the queen, who it was evident was strongly affected by the words of Longbeard. The Saxon leader, on his part, saw that he had made a favourable impression; and, fearful that the influence of father Eusebius might counteract it, he made haste to secure his ground.

"Stay here, my friends and brothers," said he to the crowd. "You cannot all enter the palace. But I will plead for your wrongs—yes—plead for them till my tongue cleaves to my mouth. Come, my brother, we will go and hear what the burgesses of London have to say against us."

While this scene had been passing on the outside, other circumstances, of which it is necessary the reader should be informed, had taken place in the interior of the palace. The archbishop, who had withdrawn from the balcony unobserved by the queen and father Eusebius, was, on his entrance to the hall of audience, met by the Earl of Moreton, and the burghers of London. It was speedily explained to him that they were completely in the power of the multitude, and that it would be exceedingly bad policy, if by any show, either of treachery or severity, they drove them to open insurrection. The Earl of Moreton, who, as we have already seen, had his motives for leniency towards the Saxons, persuaded Fitzalwyne to forego his complaint against Longbeard. It was then resolved, that the dangerous multitude should be dismissed with a promise that justice should be done, and a gentle warning, at the same time, to abstain from riot and excess for the future. The Earl of Moreton knew enough of Longbeard to be convinced that he would be satisfied with having shown his power in so striking a manner, and that he was not desirous of driving his multitudinous array of adherents to open insurrection. He also knew, that any show of violence on the part of the government, would at the present moment be attended with the greatest danger, as they had but three hundred men-at-arms to defend themselves against fifty thousand. The burgess Childe, and the mayor Fitzalwyne,

vehemently opposed what they called a mean and unworthy policy, but their objections were overruled by the other citizens, and the Earl of Moreton. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who at no time felt any great relish for scenes of uproar and violence, supported the proposition with all his influence, and it was at length decided that the plan should be adopted. The Earl of Moreton and the prelate proceeded to the balcony, where they made their appearance just as Longbeard and his brother were preparing to ride through the crowd to the principal gate of the palace. The Earl of Moreton waved his hand to the multitude, while the archbishop briefly related to the queen and Eusebius what they had agreed upon. Eusebius glowed with indignation, but it was too late to give vent to it, as the Earl of Moreton had prayed Longbeard to remain, while he informed the crowd of the pleasure of the co-regents. Raising his voice, he prayed them, as they valued their own liberties, to abstain from breaking the law. The burgesses of London had, he said, resolved to withdraw their complaint, being convinced that for the future, the repose of London would not be troubled, as the government was resolved to do justice fairly to all classes of Englishmen, whether Saxons or Normans. The tallage, the tax of which they complained, he declared to be abolished, and he promised that the other demands made by them would be taken into immediate consideration. The people heard this announcement in silent satisfaction; but hardly had the prince done speaking when they gave vent to their feelings in shouts of triumph. For full five minutes, they kept up a tremendous shouting, during which time, the archbishop was with great difficulty persuaded to address a few words to them. What he said, however, was heard only by Longbeard, and those immediately around him. He told him in as few words as possible, to live peaceably and not stir up the people. The church would pardon what had already occurred, upon condition that he would no more summon such tumultuous meetings as those which had already caused so much bloodshed in the city. Longbeard bowed his head before the prelate, in token of acquiescence, and turning to the crowd, prayed them to disperse. The queen, after bowing to the assembled people, retired from the balcony, followed by the archbishop and the Earl of Moreton, who were well pleased with the issue of this threatening affair.

In a few minutes, the space around the palace was clear and silent; although, from the distance, there could still be heard the shouts of the multitude, which had broken itself into groups, retiring to public houses in different quarters of

the city, to discuss, over their mead, ale, or hypocress, the events of the day. Longbeard and Bryan Fitzosbert rode, with a train of five hundred followers, through the little rural village of Charing, past the hermitage, and so into the Strand—then a long straggling country road, with a large house here and there, and thus to Temple Bar. The citizens looked out of their windows as he passed, and some of them cheered him loudly; but the richer they were, the less applause had they for William Longbeard. Thus they rode down Fleet Street, by Ludgate Hill, Paul's Yard, Cheapside, and Cornhill, to London Bridge, where they dismounted at the house of Jordan the Tanner.

CHAPTER VIII.

"It's good to be off with the old love
Before you are on with the new."

Old Song.

BRYAN FITZOSBERT was born to be a hunter, his heart was ever in the wild woods "a chasing the deer." The right of free warren, and of hunting in the large forests with which England was then partially covered, was a right peculiarly dear to the Saxon population; and a right, at the same time, of which the tyranny of each successive monarch had striven hard to deprive them. Deeply did they feel, and as deeply resent, the injury; and, whenever they could, they set the forest laws at defiance, and hunted unrestrained in royal and other domains. William Rufus, eager to gain over his Saxon subjects to espouse his cause against his brother Robert, had promised the leaders of that conquered nation to repeal these laws, and grant free permission to hunt in the royal forests; and so great was the boon considered, that he gained thereby many thousand adherents. As soon, however, as he was able to do without the aid which had been so useful to him in the hour of need, he, with the bad faith for which he was notorious, broke his promise to his Saxon subjects, and enacted laws still more galling and oppressive than those he had for awhile abolished. Succeeding monarchs had not treated them much better; and the consequence was, that the more influential Saxons, of whose souls the iron of slavery had not become part, had vowed to take a bitter vengeance upon their oppressors, should the day ever arrive, when they might hope to do so successfully. Bryan Fitzosbert was not one that would

tamely give up the right he cherished above all others, so, at the head of a band of men, strong and undaunted like himself, and who were proud to place themselves under his guidance, he resolved to make the forest his dwelling-place, and to set the forest laws at defiance. Their strong bows supplied them with food, and the Saxons around paid a willing tax to supply them with other necessities. Although Bryan Fitzosbert would have struck to the earth the man foolhardy enough to have called him a robber, the truth is, that he was not unallied to the worshipful fraternity, who are unable to define the strict and exact limits between *meum* and *tuum*. It is true he never sought plunder, but if a rich Norman were hardy or unfortunate enough to come in his way, he stood a pretty fair chance of being despoiled of his valuables. By the Saxon population around he was much esteemed—of them he was the friend and benefactor—he was the Robin Hood of the south of England, and his jousts and games in the greenwood were the themes of admiration among the peasantry for miles around. Dear to his sight were the long thick vistas of the forests, and pleasant the murmur of their leaves. To him the sward was a much more agreeable resting-place for the sole of his foot than the pavements of cities. Lately, however, he had ventured into London oftener than was his wont. There seemed an unusual charm in the brick walls, which he formerly so hated, and for weeks together he would roam in the metropolis, afar from his companions, and scarcely dream of returning to them. But the secret of this great change is easily divulged. There was a pair of magnets in the great city which would not let him depart, and which haunted him night and day—the bright eyes of Marian Jordan.

But the course of his true love did not run exactly smooth; an enemy to it having unexpectedly started up, in the person of Jordan himself. Robert de Robaulx, herald and poursuivant in the service of the city of London, had previously fallen deeply in love (so he imagined) with the fair Marian; and the father had supported his suit with all his influence long before he knew of the passion of Bryan Fitzosbert. Marian originally had no dislike to the handsome herald. Her heart was not then pre-occupied by the image of another; and sometimes she had half persuaded herself that De Robaulx was a very good sort of a man for a husband. The herald possessed an inexhaustible fund of good-nature, and Marian possessed a no less inexhaustible store of wit. De Robaulx was the mark at which she aimed all her girlish jests; and he, on his part, was well pleased to be the means of affording scope to the playful

arrows of the pretty tyrant. Thus matters stood at the period when she became acquainted with Bryan Fitzosbert, when a change came gradually over her spirits. Her cheerfulness in some degree forsook her; she blamed herself for the double game she was playing, in not informing her father and De Robaulx of the truth. At times she thought she would frankly confess to the herald, that she could not encourage his suit; but she had told him so many times in jest, that she was afraid he would not believe her now she was in earnest. Then, again, she persuaded herself that she was guilty of no breach of faith in giving way to her love for another, as she had never told De Robaulx that his advances were encouraged; she had never interchanged with him the tender vows made by young and ardent lovers; their meetings had been mere skirmishes of wit, and not ebullitions of attachment. At another moment she resolved to inform her father of all the circumstances, and throw herself upon his mercy; she had once ventured so far as to tell him that she would never consent to marry De Robaulx.

"If you marry at all, you little baggage," said her father, "De Robaulx must be the man; but there is no hurry—it will be time enough in seven years. You do not wish to leave your father, do you?"

He never stopped to inquire her motive; he treated it as mere girlish fickleness, and thought she would, in the end, make up her mind, and dutifully marry the man he had chosen. But when Bryan informed him of their mutual attachment, the worthy tanner wavered a little. He at last, however, came to the determination, not to consult his daughter's inclinations at all, and still to support the suit of De Robaulx, who, he thought, would make her a safer and better husband than a man who led so wild and unsettled a life as the hunter; for whom, nevertheless, in his own sphere, he entertained a very great respect, and more especially as he was the brother of William Longbeard.

When the brothers arrived, they found Jordan alone with his daughters. He had been to the great gathering at the head of his workmen, of whom he employed fifty or sixty, and had just returned and informed his daughters of the result. The cheeks of Friedolinda glowed with pride and pleasure, as she listened to her father's recital of the eloquence of Longbeard, and the blush had not subsided when he entered. There was something extremely touching and solemn in the affection which united these two so different beings. There was deformity and ambition on one side, beauty and contentment on the other; yet their opposite natures rather seemed to

increase than to diminish the strength of the fetters which bound them.

"Oh, I am so happy that you are returned—victorious and safe," she said, turning her full blue eyes upon him; "I have sighed all day about you."

"My sweet Friedolinda," he said, "I am weary of my success for thy sake. Now, when my foes are abashed—when the objects for which I have struggled seem to be within my grasp, I sicken at them all, and ask my heart why I should throw it away upon this idle dream of ambition, or the idler surface of a variable crowd, when I could so much better bestow it all upon thee."

"Oh, that thou wouldst!" said Friedolinda, whispering low, and blushing deeply; "and yet," she added, "the cause is noble!"

"If to right the wronged, and to lift up the enslaved from the dust in which they have been grovelling, be a noble cause, then is mine noble. Yet I sometimes despair."

"Never despair," said Friedolinda; "even I, a weak woman, will inspire thee with confidence; and yet—" she hesitated, and could not finish the sentence; and when Longbeard looked into her eyes, he saw that they were filled with tears.

"Weeping!" he said, "sole star of my darkness;—but I cannot speak now. Wilt thou walk with me to-night? I have much to say to thee."

"I will," she replied, in a whisper; and Longbeard, turning from her to her father, received the cordial shake of the hand with which the tanner always favoured his friends, and the two were soon engaged in conversation on the events of the day; while Friedolinda joined her sister and Bryan, at the other side of the room. Rosy-cheeked, fair-haired, blue-eyed, and fresh and blooming as a landscape after rain, a painter might have studied the face of Marian if he had been in want of a model for Hebe. Bryan thought she had never looked so beautiful. Friedolinda saw from her blushes what the subject of their discourse had been, and knew from her own heart, her sister's. The confidant of her joys, her griefs, and her hopes, she had been long ago informed of her sentiments with regard to Bryan; she knew more than the lover himself, how his love was returned, and felt happy in knowing it, as an additional bond of union between William Longbeard and herself. That *his* brother should wed *her* sister was her dearest hope; and whenever the subject was mentioned between her and her father, she never failed to expatiate upon the great merits of the hunter. But her

words fell upon deaf ears, or a deaf mind; Robert de Robaulx was the father's choice; to him his word had been given, and he could never gainsay it, even for the sake of Bryan Fitz-osbert.

Thus Friedolinda did not make one too many in the conversation between them; she knew and sympathized with their mutual distress, and heard with great satisfaction, that a new attempt was about to be made upon the stout heart of the tanner, in which the lovers, she herself, and Longbeard, were all to take part. They had even hopes that De Robaulx himself—a frank, good-humoured man—might be made to see the hopelessness of his love, and generously renounce all his pretensions, when he found how much pain they gave to one whose affections were preoccupied. This was the most difficult part of the matter; and Marian undertook it herself, although she had formerly tried it and failed. De Robaulx would not believe, and had continued to hope, even although she had told him to despair. Friedolinda now came to the rescue, and both sisters agreed that a more serious attempt should be made to convince this man—who would not be convinced—that his love could never be returned,—and that this achieved, all the rest would be easy.

Jordan was summoned to attend a grand council of the Saxons on the morrow, and that day was fixed upon for the interview with De Robaulx; and full of hope the little party broke up. The brothers took their departure, and Jordan was left alone with his daughters. Their hearts were both full, and in a few minutes the good tanner had not even their society to solace his hours; so he put on his cap, and walked over the bridge to his tan-yard at Bermondsey.

CHAPTER IX.

“O! come to me when daylight sets,
Sweet—then come to me.”

MOORE.

A BEAUTIFUL moon arose that night over the silent and peaceable city of London. Friedolinda looked forth from the window of her chamber, which overhung the Thames,—her father's house being situated on the bridge,—and saw a pleasure barge with four rowers, awaiting at the stairs. She knew it by the colours of its rowers, as it lay in the clear moonshine,—and putting her mantle over her shoulders, she

shaded back her hair from her eyes, and sat down at the open window to await the signal she expected. It was the boat of Fitzosbert, who was fond of the water, and was often rowed about in the solitary parts of the stream far into the night, when all the city was sunk in sleep. She had not sat long, when he waved his hand from the barge, and in another minute a knock at the door announced the arrival of one of the oarsmen, to escort her over the bridge. She drew her veil closely over her face, and entering the barge, it struck into the middle of the current, the tide running strongly down. Longbeard warmly pressed her hand, which he held in his for some minutes, without a word being said on either side,—as they shot rapidly down the silent river, past the old solemn fortress of the Tower, and the bounds of the ancient city. They scarcely passed a vessel in their course after they had got beyond the immediate purlieus of the city, and there they had seen but about twenty or thirty. The low shores of the stream on either side were covered with high grass and green rushes, and the silence as they passed was unbroken, except by the dash of their own oars and the ripple of the waters. It was thus that Longbeard loved to converse with his Friedolinda; the whisper of their earnest discourse was inaudible to the boatmen, and they were as much alone as if the boat were self-impelled down the stream. But that night, there was a strange presentiment of evil on the mind of the Longbeard,—he thought his Friedolinda had never been so beautiful, or appeared so kind and good as she did at that moment; but he feared, he knew not why, that the intense pleasure he felt in gazing upon her would not long be granted him, and that some calamity which might separate them was destined to fall either upon her or him. His success in overawing the regents of the kingdom, that day, with his train of fifty thousand devoted followers, had left a melancholy impression on his mind. He could not say wherefore, but so it was. Friedolinda saw his sadness, and strove in vain to alleviate it. He struggled with it himself, but the weight on his mind would not depart; it set his reason at defiance, and all objects he had formerly thought worth living for, except one, appeared valueless in his eyes. But in that hour of depression, his love was all the greater for his sorrow. He thought, if ambition were ungrateful to the mind, that the love of one true soul was worth ten thousand-fold all that ambition had ever promised. And yet it seemed strange to himself, that he who had long passed the fiery period of youth and passion,—he who had been a stern soldier of the cross,—he whose heart glowed with mighty schemes for the liberty

and happiness of his race, should at last concentrate all his soul upon one object, and that object the love of a woman. And why not? he inquired; did not the love of woman better become the staid man than the hot boy? would it not soften the undue ruggedness of the soldier of the cross, and would it not be the star of his ambition, shining a cynosure on high, to lead him to do what was right only, and to warn him when he unwittingly went astray? Yes; he thought it would, and in that thought his love became reconciled to his ambition.

"My own Friedolinda," he said, breaking the silence which had again stolen over them, and looking on her face with a smile of melancholy pleasure; "thou who hast not despised the hunch on my back, and preferred a straighter man to William Fitzosbert, thou knowest I have loved thee long, but thou canst not know how well,—whither shall we go, and what shall I do to make thee happy?"

"Ask thy heart, Fitzosbert," she replied; "and its answer shall be mine."

"I would fly from the noisy multitude altogether; I would dwell with thee in a quiet forest, devote my life solely to thee, and renounce all the dreams of ambition for ever."

"Happy,—oh most happy should I be," replied Friedolinda, looking up into his face; "and such is the wish of my heart; but reason, less fond, tells me it cannot be. I know thy secret soul too well to believe that thou couldst renounce all the visions of thy youth, and sink into the mere lover. It would be wronging thy noble nature and thy cause to wish it."

"Mine own beloved; thy mind is as thy face,—beautiful exceedingly; and these struggles of right against might, which I have so long carried on, will be perchance successful; the right and the might may combine, and the Saxon race may be free as they ought to be. My task will then be ended, and I will be thine for ever—thine only."

"Then would reason and love be alike satisfied," replied the maiden, blushing as she spoke; "and that happy day shall ever be remembered in my prayers."

"Pray for me then to-morrow, oh Friedolinda; for to-morrow may be the crisis of my fate. The excess of my love for thee has made me a coward,—so great appears my treasure in thee, that I fear each moment some envious fate may make me lose thee. To-morrow the Saxon chiefs assemble, and then must the fate not of London alone, but of all England be decided. And yet I fear the result,—not from the malice of enemies, for that can be guarded against; but the lukewarmness, or the fickleness of friends,—the curse of all great

enterprises,—the division that steals into the camp and accomplishes that which hostility would strive in vain to effect. To-morrow will decide,” he continued, kindling as he spoke. “If all goes well, then shall the Saxon race be free and mighty as of yore, and thou, my Friedolinda, shalt be,—hush—let the wind not hear it,—let the waters not carry the tale,” and he sunk his voice to a whisper; “thou shalt be the lady of this land,—companion for princes,—first in rank as thou art in beauty and goodness,—and the admiration of wide England.”

Friedolinda sighed. “And if it fail!” said she.

“Then we will away to the wild wood for a time,” said he; “for London may be unsafe: we will dwell in the forest with my brother Bryan; and peace and love may be ours, in a humbler sphere.”

“And is there no other alternative?” she said, “can nothing else happen?”

“Yes,” he replied, “I may die in the attempt.”

“Then attempt it not, if the risk is so great. Let us fly to the wild woods at once; and the cause thou hast at heart may be advanced on some more favourable opportunity. Thou hast no right to risk thy life—knowest thou not that mine is bound up with it?”

“I will take care of it for thee—I will be prudent a thousand-fold for the greatness of the danger—for oh! my Friedolinda, I cannot go back—I must advance—my very friends would tear me to pieces, were I to fail or forsake them now. So pray thou for me. A cloud has been hanging over me—a cowardice has crept over my heart, and I have been more a craven since I have heard thee own thy great love for me, than ever I was in my life—but I begin to conquer it. I will shake off the weight; hope, and a good cause, shall banish the dark presentiments of evil that have been haunting me—and I will arise again like a man. Look, what a delicious moonlight lies upon the water; hark how calmly and musically the waves ripple around our boat. How beautiful all things appear. My soul is at peace with nature. Wilt sing to me, Friedolinda, one of the sweet songs thou hast sung to me before—the sweeter from being oftener heard?—thy voice will be balm to my soul, and will banish all thoughts, but such as are pure and peaceful as thyself.”

Fitzosbert drew the curtains of the raised part of the barge, that the oarsmen might not look upon the face of his beloved as she sung, while he opened the curtains on either side, that the echoes might tremble over the waters. She blushed, and took a lute that hung from the side of their pleasure-boat,

and preluding, sang the following in a sweet, clear, and sonorous voice, to a melancholy but pleasing air. It was a song Fitzosbert had taught her at the commencement of their love, and was made by him ere he had acquired sufficient confidence to avow the affection which he felt. Friedolinda often sang it to herself in her happy moments, but never to him, unless he asked her, for it made her voice tremble more than its wont, and made her face grow warm with blushes.

“ Oh ! if I were the sweet west wind
That blows my love on thee,
I'd envy not an angel's lot,
So happy would I be.
Friedolinda !—Frie-do-lin !

“ I'd peer all day into those eyes
Of love-inspiring blue,
Or sport amid those tresses bright
From morn till even dew.
Friedolinda !—Frie do-lin !

“ I'd revel on that cheek of red,
And, borne on pinions free,
Would cull all odours of the spring,
And waft them, love, to thee.
Friedolinda !—Frie-do-lin !

“ And at thy lattice all night long
I'd come and breathe a lay,
Full of the love, which, if I dared,
I'd own to thee to-day.
Friedolinda !—Frie-do-lin !”

The song had ceased, and the Longbeard still sat listening, with the echo in his heart, and it was some minutes ere he was aware that the sweet voice of the singer was mute. When he looked up, he saw Friedolinda, with her cheek supported on her hand, gazing upon the bosom of the waters, on which the moonlight shone in mellow radiance, and noticed, at the same time, that they were far down the river. The wood-crowned heights of Greenwich lay to their right, and the widening reaches of the stream were before them. The bells of some church along-shore announced the hour of ten, and Longbeard, surprised at the lateness, ordered the boatmen to row as fast as they could back again towards London. The voice of music had sent peace into the troubled soul of the ambitious man; the voice of his beloved, swelling upon the evening breeze, had brought him comfort, and when it ceased, he was a happier man. The enjoyment of music to those who are truly capable of it, may be called an additional sense; and he who, by some imperfection of mind or body, has no relish

for divine sounds, is almost as much to be pitied as a man who cannot see. One sweet well, which refreshes the hearts of his fellows, is to him a spring sealed, and a fountain shut up; the pleasant path, that can lead others from the earthly and grovelling to the unearthly and divine, is to him a barren and a profitless way. He is bound to charity and loving-kindness by one tie less than others, for music, if it cannot lift the soul to heaven, can at least bring it nearer to that bright abode, and open it for the reception of all holy and tender emotions.

In this state of mind were both Friedolinda and her lover; and for some time their mutual cares and anxieties were forgotten, and they were unconscious that sin or shame were denizens of this world. But how delicate is this charm, and how little will break it! As they sat in silence, pleased and pensive, the string of the lute, which had been too tightly wound, suddenly snapped. Friedolinda started—and Fitzosbert too—and their reverie was dispersed—their visions disappeared. That little twang recalled them to the reality around them; they saw the huge city and its cumbersome bridge lying before them, and Fitzosbert recollected, what he had forgotten in the enchantment of the song, that the morrow was not far distant, when great deeds were to be done—when love was to be disregarded for ambition—when he was to throw the dice that might decide the great game he was playing, and seal his fate, whether for good or evil. He took a tender adieu of his beloved, whom he saw safe to her own door, and wrapping his cloak around him, to conceal his figure, though there was but slight danger at that hour of his being recognised by any who might wish him harm, he proceeded over the bridge to the city, and rapidly through several narrow streets, till he arrived at his own door, exactly opposite the London Stone, in Watling Street.

CHAPTER X.

“We must speak,
Or we shall burst.—

—In a cause like this,
The husbandman would change his ploughing irons
To weapons of defence, and leave the earth untill’d,
Although a general dearth should follow.”

MASSINGER'S *Bashful Lover*.

THE door was opened to him by his trusty friend and adherent Nicholas Bamme, an armourer, who, with fifty other stout

fellows, formed his constant guard. Having been left a comfortable fortune at the death of his father, a substantial citizen of London, William Fitzosbert kept a large house, the same his father had occupied, and a hospitable table every day for his followers. Two dozen of them constantly slept in the house, and as many more lodged in the neighbourhood, within call, and were ever ready to defend him in case of danger. Most of these entertained the most extraordinary affection for his person,—to them his word was a law,—and his slightest wish a command. Nor was his influence over the immense body of the London artisans less strong. The whole labouring population of the city and its environs, numbering at least fifty thousand men, were devoted to his cause; and, if he had so willed it, he could at an hour's warning have let them loose to ravage and destroy. But he uniformly preached peace,—and bloodshed and plunder were never in his intention. He has been much maligned by ignorant or prejudiced historians, and, among others, by honest John Stow, who accuses him of almost every crime forbidden in the Decalogue; and he is now almost exclusively known from the traditions which the unfriendly have handed down concerning him. His moderation in a time of excitement, when he held great and dangerous power in his hands, has never been sufficiently appreciated, nor have his extraordinary qualities, so much in advance of the age in which he lived, ever had justice rendered them. To condemn him, as Stow does, because he was the cause of bloodshed, would be to condemn by implication some of the brightest names in the page of history. Old Stow abuses him, and calls him a malefactor, because he “moved y^e common people to seek libertie and freedome, and not to be subject to y^e riche and mighty,” and, because, “he defended with all his power y^e poore men's cause against y^e riche.” Stow borrowed this opinion from early and prejudiced chroniclers, and the character he gives of this earliest of the reformers is not the true one.

On his entrance, he returned, but in few words, the greeting of Nicholas Bammie, and retired to his own chamber—not to sleep, but to muse over the events of the past and the coming day. He lay awake upon his couch, and thought of what he had to do;—dreams of ambition arose before him, and his soul teemed with mighty aspirations; he thought what a beautiful statue of Freedom he might form, from the rude marble of the populace, if he had but the tools wherewith to work. He fancied that the day would soon come, when his voice should arouse the whole Saxon population of England to take arms for the conquest of their ancient independence. Swelling with the

glorious vision, he saw himself supreme judge of England, and governing it under a righteous king, by whose permission he restored their fair domains and fruitful acres to the descendants of those Saxon chiefs who had been despoiled of their possessions to reward the needy and rapacious followers of William the Conqueror. Then he would curb Norman insolence, and re-establish those ancient and wise laws of Alfred and Edward the Confessor, which their successors had suffered to fall into abeyance. At other times his thoughts were less soaring, but still high. He imagined himself sitting in the civic chair of Fitzalwyne, dispensing that justice to the poor which was now denied them, and dealing out that same justice upon their oppressors which had been too long delayed. And amid all this, came sweet thoughts of Friedolinda.—Amid the constant wear and tear of ambition, he thought upon her love, and was refreshed and comforted.

He arose at the first blush of dawn—parted his long glossy brown hair carefully over the middle of his forehead, where it hung in ringlets over his neck, trimmed his beard, and adjusted his attire—which for that day was not of its usual simplicity. Over his jerkin of leather, he threw a richly embroidered mantle of purple velvet, put a heavy gold chain around his neck, took his great battle-axe in his hand, which he usually carried in the streets, and descended to the large dining-hall of his house. Here he found his brother Bryan, Nicholas Bamme, William Brewer, Hugh Cotes, Edgar Koning, and other artisans his followers, already assembled, and awaiting his appearance, to commence the substantial breakfast of beef and fish, and bread and ale, that was prepared and laid out for them. Longbeard and Bryan took their places at the head of the long table, which was raised about a foot higher than the rest—the mark of their superior rank, which was ungrudgingly acceded to them; and a blessing having been asked by Longbeard himself, the meal began. This over (and it did not last long), the business of the day commenced. The table was removed, and on a chair of state, at the upper end of the hall, sat Longbeard, the point of his enormous battle-axe resting on the floor, and his hand supporting itself upon its shaft, while a crowd of people gradually filled the whole of the room, and even the adjoining street, all eager to see the Saxon listening to the complaints of his countrymen. On either side of him were ranged his trusty friends, and silence being proclaimed, the proceedings began.

First of all, a burly citizen was ushered into his presence. The man bowed low at his feet, and stated his grievance. He

was a wine seller, and resided in Watling-street—a near neighbour of the Longbeard. Three days before, a party of Norman youths, amounting to six, came into his house, and drank their fill of his best wines, and were departing without payment, when he placed himself at the door to bar their egress, and requested his money. For only answer they knocked him down, and trampled upon him, and his arm was broken by their violence. A cry of “Shame! shame!” was raised, as the man told the tale; but he had not concluded. He went before the mayor, Fitzalwyne, he said, and complained, and called upon him to punish the offenders. Fitzalwyne requested that they would attend and answer it, but they sent word back that they were busy, and could not come. He attended on the following day, and Fitzalwyne ordered him out of his presence, threatening, that if ever he came there again, he would have him whipped through London at the cart’s tail. As a last resource, he had come to Longbeard, “the friend of the poor,” certain that he would have justice from him, if from no other.

The men present looked into each other’s faces at this recital, and Longbeard arose:—“How long, O men of London,” said he, “shall these things last? are we men or beasts, that we should be thus used? But here is another coming—here is more wrong to be righted. Friend, give me the names of these Normans, and I will plead for thee before the mayor against them. We shall see if he dare refuse justice.”

The names were given, and Longbeard wrote them on his tablet, and seating himself again, the next complainant came forward. He was a grey-headed old man, and was unable to support himself without a staff. He told his story in a trembling voice.—He was a very poor man, he said, and lived upon the produce of his garden, which he sold in the London market. On the previous day the son of a rich citizen had, out of pure wantonness, ridden his horse through his little piece of ground, broken down his fences, and destroyed the produce of his toil. He had not complained, because he knew it was of no use, but had called at the aggressor’s house, to crave, in the humblest terms, any remuneration he might condescend to make for his frolic. He was called a vagabond and an impostor; he was threatened with the pillory, and turned forcibly away by the domestics. He had now no prospect before him but starvation, unless the city authorities would compel the aggressor to do justice; but his voice was feeble, and he came to Longbeard, knowing well that he would plead his cause, and when he pleaded it was not seldom in vain. Longbeard made a note of the complain-

ant's name, and that of his despoiler, and again rising, leanced on the point of his axe, and spoke to the crowd around him. "Brothers," he said, "there is no justice for the poor; the laws of our wise ancestors are annulled, and we only live at the mercy of our tyrants. Who are the rich men, that they should trample on us? that we should only enjoy the hard earnings of our toil by sufferance from them? that we should only have a right to breathe with their permission? But the cup of our slavery is not yet full; the bitter draught is reaching to the brim—it will overflow—and then, woe to the oppressor!"

Longbeard gathered his velvet robes around him, and sat down to hear the next complaint. Several persons came forward in succession, and detailed grievances more or less severe, which they had endured without the possibility of obtaining redress; some had been beaten; some had been insulted; some had been robbed, and many wantonly injured. Longbeard made a note of each complaint as he heard it, took down the name of the complaining party and of those complained against, and all having been heard, he arose again, and invited them to accompany him to the presence of the mayor, Fitzalwyne. To this functionary was delegated, by the lord high justiciary, additional powers for hearing causes in the city of London; powers very unlike those possessed by his successors till the present day. In that age the mayor of London was not only a judge but a jury; not only a jury, but an executioner. The power of life and death was in his hands, and he was only restricted in the exercise of his power by the caprice of the king, who sometimes allowed him to sentence a score of men to the gallows without interfering, and at other times called him to a strict account for an erroneous judgment in which life might not have been affected. Fitzalwyne sat in the judgment-seat at Guildhall, clad in his red robes over a suit of mail, his grim, tall, warlike figure seeming as unlike that of a merchant and chief magistrate of a trading city, as could well be imagined. To the Guildhall, then, Longbeard proceeded, followed by the fifty men composing his body-guard, the several complainants, and a crowd of about a thousand persons. This procession walked through the streets in the most orderly manner, increasing its numbers as it went, Longbeard being greeted by an occasional cheer, or a handkerchief waved from an open window. On reaching the Guildhall, the crowd stopped at the outside, and Longbeard, Bryan, Nicholas Bamme, and half-a-dozen others, with the complainants in the rear, entered the presence of the great city dignitary. Fitzalwyne paused as they entered, and the

usher of the court called silence several times, annoyed that the sound of their feet should penetrate into a place where they were so unwelcome.

"Away with your armed followers!" said Fitzalwyne, suddenly starting up, and confronting Longbeard, being at the time so near that he could have touched him. "Away, I say, and come not here to overawe the seat of justice; away with you!"

"My lord," replied the Longbeard, calmly, and looking him full in the face,—returning him glance for glance, unabashed by the sternness of the chief magistrate, "I come hither as a suppliant; will you not hear me?"

"No!" replied Fitzalwyne, in a voice of thunder; "who gave you authority? What are you, that you dare to threaten me with your armed men at your heels, and come to intimidate while you pretend to sue? Who are you, I say?"

"A citizen of London," replied Fitzosbert, "and I claim a right to be heard."

"Come alone, then, and I will hear you," said Fitzalwyne, "but not otherwise."

Longbeard made no reply, but immediately turned to his followers: he saw the indignation gathering upon their faces and turning again to the mayor, who had sat down with his hand on the hilt of his sword, he said, "My lord, I have been deputed by my countrymen, who have suffered grievous wrong, to come and ask you for justice in their name. Do you refuse it?"

"Not to them, but to you, who have no right to ask it. Who is master of London, sirrah, you or I?" he added, with rising wrath, "do you wish to seat yourself in my chair?—come then, place your foot even on the step here, and that moment shall be your last. By the God who made me, I swear it!"

"Do not suffer anger to sit with you," said the Longbeard, with a calmness which almost drove the mayor to desperation; "anger defiles the judgment-seat."

"Away!" replied the mayor, again rising; "or from this hour I will show you no mercy. I will appeal no more to lords high justiciaries, or to regents or co-regents, but will wage the war against you single-handed, and rely only upon myself."

"My lord," again said the Longbeard, while his followers looked on in silence, "I fear you not, I am armed with righteousness, and the wrongs of thousands make me strong."

"Away with you, I say!" vociferated Fitzalwyne, "ere my patience fail me quite."

"Ha! ha!" said Bryan Fitzosbert, with a laugh of contempt.

The mayor appeared stung to the quick. He rose furiously, and drew his sword, as if he would have struck the mocker into the earth. He restrained himself, however, but the effort was great; and, in a voice husky and low, he addressed this new object of his indignation.

"How dare you, Bryan Fitzosbert, show your face in my presence! There is a price upon your head,—you have broken the forest laws a thousand times,—and for each time you should die—if that were possible. Seize him, officers! seize the outlaw and traitor!"

Bryan laughed again. The few officers of the court, the halberdiers, and the usual train of the mayor, showed no disposition to execute the order, and it was well that they did not, or blood would have been shed. A murmur arose among the adherents of Longbeard, which was quickly caught up by the multitude without, and things began to assume a serious aspect for the safety of the mayor, when Longbeard waved his hand and entreated silence.

"Friends and brothers," said he, "be my witnesses that I have spoken with respect, that I have made no threats, that I came to ask justice, and that justice has been refused. Let us go,—the day of our deliverance is at hand."

So saying, he turned and left the hall with his followers, while the mayor, striking his hand with desperate strength upon the table before him, swore in his secret soul that he would have vengeance for the insults he had that day received.

Arrived in the open street, in front of the Guildhall, the crowd there gathered received Longbeard with a loud and continuous shout of exultation. He prepared to address them, and silence was restored immediately. That day, perhaps, was his greatest triumph, and never before had his eloquence been so overpowering. He seemed anxious to try, as it were, what influence he could exercise over the passions and wills of that multitude before him. He made no choice of words, yet his diction was elegant, and, though elegant, never above the comprehension of his listeners. As if he had been waving the wand of an enchanter over the multitude, and could move them at his will by an irresistible and supernatural power, he excited them to indignation, till the fire flashed from the eyes of thousands. He then dropped his voice, and changing his theme, by some happy allusion convulsed them with laughter. Then in a softer tone, and with sympathy expressed on his melancholy features, interested them in some tale of sorrow

to such a degree that they hardly dared to breathe. "I am," said he, at last, with rising enthusiasm, "the apostle of the poor. I have come to deliver you from burthens too grievous to be borne. The rich man and the oppressor shall tremble as I go by, but the weary and the sorrow-stricken shall look up at my approach. I have dug for ye a well of pure water; some hither and drink of it, oh ye slaves, and you shall regain freedom; but woe to the tyrant, or the uncharitable rich man! The waters I have provided for the refreshment of the poor shall turn into poison upon your lips! Rejoice, my brothers, rejoice! for the day of your deliverance is at hand." The eyes of the speaker sparkled with animation, and with his hands stretched over the multitude, and his long hair streaming in the wind, he indeed looked, as he had described himself, an apostle.

"Well done, Longbeard!" shouted a man in the crowd; "let's go at once and hang up those saucy whelps who have wronged our brother—away, boys, away!" The crowd seemed to relish the proposal, and the mass began to sway to and fro. The quick eye of Longbeard saw the danger, and he was half afraid that by his eloquence he had conjured a tempest that he would find it difficult to allay. The huzzas of the multitude, eager for a riot, resounded in his ears. Stretching out his hands, half authoritatively and half imploringly, towards them, he entreated them to stay. "Men and brothers," said he (and each word that he uttered fell as distinctly upon the ears, even of the most distant of the crowd, as the tone of a warning bell, pouring out a stream of rich but sorrowful sound), "stay and listen to the words of William Fitzosbert. It is not fitting that we should take vengeance into our own hands against these foolish and haughty men. Our cause is too just, and we ought not to degrade it with riot: too much blood has already been shed—let us wait for justice;—it will come!"

"No, no," shouted the same voice, "we have waited long enough already; let us have justice now—let us take it!"

"Silence, sirrah," said Longbeard, fixing his keen eye upon him, "or if thou wilt speak, come hither and stand up beside me, that all present may see their enemy."

The man said not another word, and Longbeard continued. "Yes, my friends and brothers, we can wait yet a little while. The longer the snow ball rolls along the ground, the larger it becomes—let us only have patience and perseverance, and it becomes an avalanche, and then woe to those who stand in its way."

A loud huzza testified the approbation of the multitude,

and amidst the waving of their caps, the Longbeard and his immediate friends withdrew. The crowd immediately broke itself up into little knots, and gradually dispersed.

CHAPTER XI.

“How high a pitch their resolution soars!
What sayst thou to this?”

SHAKSPEARE.

LONGBEARD, on his arrival at his own home, found several Saxons of wealth and influence waiting to receive him. It was an assembly that had long been convened, to debate on the prospects of the Saxon cause. There were thanes and franklins, sithcundmen and ceorls, to the number of about forty, who had arrived in London by different routes, and with as much secrecy as possible, to consider whether there were any chance of forcing from the government of that day any return to the ancient laws which their forefathers had made. Under the Norman rule, England had become one vast royal park, in which no man might hunt without the king's permission; and the Saxons, resolutely bent upon following the chase, as they did of yore, without asking consent of any man, found themselves subjected to the most oppressive penalties. To kill one of the king's deer was a crime as great as to kill a man, and to be expiated accordingly; and to kill lesser game, or birds, subjected the offender to various punishments—such as loss of eyes, ears, or hands, and on the second offence, to death. This was the great and overpowering grievance of which they all complained, and which, by some bold effort, they were anxious to abolish at once and for ever. For this grievance, Bryan Fitzosbert had taken up arms, and become “a mighty hunter in the land”—a hero in the eyes of all his Saxon fellow-countrymen—a thief and an outlaw in the estimation of the Normans. The opportunity was considered favourable for an attempt at freedom. King Richard was a captive in Germany, and by many believed to be dead; his brother, the Earl of Moreton, was more than suspected of a design to seize upon his throne, and had made overtures to the great thanes upon the subject of their aid; and the power of William Longbeard was at its height. Everything seemed auspicious for the striking of a grand blow, and now was the day on which all was to be decided.

The Saxons rose, and received Longbeard with much cordiality, as he entered fresh from his recent triumph; but Bryan Fitzosbert received the still heartier congratulations of the thanes and franklins. A band of strong artisans, armed, some with bows, and others with spears or axes, was stationed outside to keep watch; the doors were closed, the circle formed, and the deliberation began, which Longbeard considered the crisis of his fate. High in the midst of them he sat—his usually pale face, red with the flush of recent and not yet passed excitement—his purple robe around him, and his hand on his ponderous battle-axe, which it required almost the strength of a giant to wield. Around him sat his brother Bryan, Athelstane, Edgar, Egbert, Adelung, and other chiefs, together with Nicholas Bamme, William Brewer, Koning, and the leaders of the London Saxons. Longbeard noticed, with some surprise, that his trustiest friend, Jordan the tanner, was absent; but the deliberations began without him, although he several times turned an anxious eye towards the door, expecting that the burly figure of his friend would enter. There was a general cry for Longbeard, and he arose to speak:—

“Brothers, friends, and fellow-countrymen,” he said, stretching his arms abroad, “may the God of justice look with favour upon us, and inspire us with wisdom to act justly! We are all here bound by a common cause,—we have all suffered the same wrong,—free denizens of this English soil we have been made slaves; and, day by day, the bonds that have galled us have been drawn tighter, until they have pierced into our very flesh, and we can endure no longer. Friends and brothers, aid with your counsel, and tell us what we are to do. Our oppressors, it is true, are many, but so are we. They are strong, but we are stronger, because our cause is just. Shall we arise in our might to conquer? Shall we gather every one of us, from our shires and tithings,—from the length and breadth of the land,—with our good swords in our hands,—and ask, in a voice of thunder, who shall be bold enough to stand between us and the dear rights we struggle for? You do not reply! Shall we then listen to the false words of the Earl of Moreton, and aid him to ascend the throne of his brother, that he may trample upon us when we have served him, and he has no further use for us? Trust him not, my brethren, and put no faith in him. False to his king, false to his father, false to his brother, do you think he would be true to us? Never! Think you that there is nobility in the blood of any one of that race, and that they consider their pledged word as of more value than the

idle wind? Believe them not;—what promise ever made to a Saxon have they kept! Not one; they consider us as dogs, and so they treat us! The noblest of them all is the king of this realm, the brave Richard the lion-hearted; were he here, the cry of our sorrow and our demand for justice would not go unregarded; but evil men conspire against him and us—weak men convulse the realm by their misdeeds, and there is no hope left for us but in ourselves. Let us assemble month after month, week after week, day after day, in our thousands and tens of thousands; let us pay no more unjust taxes; let us obey no more forest-laws; they are not the laws of good King Edward the Confessor, which alone we have sworn to obey, and which alone ought to govern the realm of England. And while we do this, let us interfere with no man—let us neither burn nor destroy—let us take no man's life and injure no man's property; so shall we speak to our rulers in a voice they shall not dare despise, and success will reward us. If they attack, we will defend ourselves, but we will not begin. Woe—woe—woe unto those who would not only oppress us, but murder us, because we complain. Woe unto them, one and all!"

The artisans of London applauded the speech of their leader, but no voice came from the thanes and franklins.

Nicholas Bamme arose. "Our brother has well spoken," said he, "let us put no trust in the Earl of Moreton. If we change our king at all, let us have a Saxon; and why not King William!" The thanes and franklins, and the ceorls and sithcundmen, looked into each other's faces, as if to ask what was meant. "Yes, I say," continued Bamme, "why not King William? King William Longbeard! huzza!"

The artisans waved their caps, but a sound of hissing came from the bench where the thanes and their friends were sitting. Several of them started up at once, and with furious gesticulations all spoke together, so that no sound was distinguishable. The Londoners being in the majority, raised the cry for Longbeard, who had also stood up and appeared as if he would speak. It was a long time ere silence was restored,—but his strong sonorous voice rose above the din, and his words were heard clear and distinct amid the tumult, which then gradually subsided.

"The zeal of our brother is great," said he, pointing to Nicholas Bamme; "his friendship is warm,—but he has no discretion; forgive, I entreat you, his foolish speech as regards me,—so foolish as to require no apology; but there was wisdom in a portion of it, nevertheless. If we changed our king, why should we take another Norman? should we not

be making a trap and running into it? Is there no man in broad England,—no son of our ancient kings worthy to wear the crown? Ay, that there is—if we will but find him.”

A portly thane, named Athelstane, arose to speak. “The counsel is bold,” said he; “but it is not wise. We are scattered over the land, and could not support the fierce warfare that would arise; a warfare of extermination between the two races. Better aid King John, if he will grant us the rights we struggle for. Richard is dead, they say,—John is the next heir,—and so I say, King John for ever!”

“King John for ever! King John for ever!” exclaimed the ceorls and sitheundmen, but their voices found no echo among the Londoners.

“To me, the counsel seems good,” said Bryan Fitzosbert; “but where is the Earl of Moreton? How are we to know that he will make this attempt if we aid him, and how are we to be sure that he will pay our price for it?”

“Down with King John!” said Nicholas Bamme; “his heart is not with us,—he has no sympathy for us, and would become a worse tyrant than the other; down with him!”

“Down with him! No King John!” said the Londoners. “Peace! peace!” said another Saxon, named Egbert: “let not strife come amongst us; let us choose no king, and make no attempt to set up one in the place of another. Let us strengthen ourselves, so that no king shall find it safe to continue his forest-laws, or his tallages that grind us to the earth.”

“Ay, ay,” said the thanes and their adherents, while the Londoners echoed their assent.

“And then,” said Bryan, “your golden opportunity, that never may return again, is lost for ever. Richard the Lion Heart is in prison, perhaps dead, and John may be at this moment the King of England. Get a charter of freedom from him, that shall bind him when he ascends the throne, and then we’ll help him; that is my counsel.”

“It is good counsel,” said Longbeard, “but it cannot be executed. Was the Earl of Moreton not invited to send some friend hither to-day, and has he done so? He distrusts us already—he sees his chances of the crown are great and immediate without us, and he would scorn your aid if you offered it; if you doubt me—try.”

“Then we *will* try,” said Athelstane.

“Ay, do; and give him more cause for his jealousy of us; let him into our secrets, and tell him our weak parts, and where he may best put his hand to crush us,” rejoined Longbeard, “I say, trust none of his blood! The throne is his

without our assistance, and all we can do is to make ourselves strong to resist his evil laws."

Twenty of them arose to speak at once, and there was a loud hubbub of voices, but one by one gave way to Egbert the Saxon, who remained standing. "The failure of the Earl of Moreton," said he, "to ask our aid this day, shows he can do without us; and all we can do is to make ourselves as strong in our right as he is in his might; we must treat with him on an equality of power, or we shall have the worst of it. Longbeard has well spoken."

"But what do you propose?" inquired Athelstane. At this instant the door was opened, and the artisan stationed on the watch announced that a knight, who seemed to have ridden hard, and who gave his name Sir Roger Poyntz, was desirous of being admitted. He was quite alone.

"He comes from the Earl of Moreton," said Athelstane, "let him enter."

The assembled Saxons whispered each man to his neighbour, and all eyes were directed with much curiosity to the door as the knight entered. He was clad in complete steel, and the clank of his armour sounded before him as he trod. He was an elderly man, with a hard-featured face, grizzly hair, and a frame that seemed almost as iron as his mail. He returned with stiff courtesy the salutations of the assembled Saxons, and without taking the seat which was proffered him, handed to Longbeard a scroll of parchment, which he had been deputed by the Earl of Moreton to deliver to him. "This you will read," said he, "and send your answer to the noble Prince John, without delay; and, as time presses, I will, if it please you, await your answer and carry it back with me." He then sat down by the tacit consent of the company, and Longbeard unfolded the scroll and read aloud. It was a charter, by which the severity of the forest laws was considerably mitigated, the tallage and some other imposts totally abolished, and a privilege granted to the Saxons of being allowed to plead in certain courts in their own language. It bore, however, neither date, nor seal, nor signature.

"And what are we to understand by this?" said Longbeard, addressing Sir Roger Poyntz, who sat in grim silence awaiting until the reading of the document had finished; "how are we to know that this comes from the Earl of Moreton?"

"I have said it," replied Sir Roger Poyntz to the last query; "sufficient warranty, or ought to be, for any man in Christendom, who values his life a rush."

"I do not doubt your word or your valour, Sir Roger

Poyntz," said Longbeard, "both are known over all the realm of England; but what does this parchment mean?"

"You have read it," replied Poyntz, "are you so dull as not to understand what *should* be in it, from the hints given by that which *is* in it?"

"I take it as an expression of the good intentions of the Earl of Moreton towards his Saxon friends," said Longbeard; "but what are the intentions, and what price are we to pay to change these intentions into deeds?"

"Fealty, as shown by deeds," said Poyntz, with a significant look around him; and he added, rising and speaking with emphasis, "the KING will sign that parchment—when he is king—should it be to-morrow."

"Long live King John!" shouted Athelstane, throwing his cap into the air, and his cry was loudly repeated by his followers, "Long live King John!"

Sir Roger Poyntz relaxed his hard face into a smile, "and what says William Longbeard and the men of London? Are they all silent?"

"We are not satisfied," said Nicholas Bamme, rising and motioning his friends to do the same, while Longbeard said not a word, but sat with his hand resting on his battle-axe; but his pulse throbbed and his heart beat high.

"How!" said Poyntz; "what would you have more?"

"We men of London," replied Bamme, "have other complaints, and have had other wrongs. We require the death or banishment of Fitzalwyne, the unworthy and tyrannical mayor of our city!"

"Down with Fitzalwyne!" replied fifty of the Londoners at once; "and Longbeard for ever!"

"Yes; Longbeard for ever!" said Bamme; "Longbeard, mayor of London!"

"Longbeard, mayor of London! Longbeard, mayor of London!" was again shouted till the very rafters rang again, and even the thanes and the franklins, and the sitheundmen, who had in general but little sympathy for their fellow-countrymen in the city, caught the enthusiasm, and joined their voices to swell the loud applause with which the proposition was received. "Longbeard, mayor of London!—Longbeard for ever!"

"Ah well," replied Sir Roger Poyntz, when the cheers had subsided, "a proper mayor I am sure he would make; why do you not choose him to that dignity? the king would confirm it! I swear in his name, in the presence of you all, that he will confirm it, and so I say, Longbeard, mayor of London!"

"Friends and countrymen," said Longbeard, "I would not be mayor of London, could I be so to-morrow; the name is rank in the nostrils of the people. We have had but one mayor, and I hope we shall never have another. In the free Saxon times that are gone by, London had its Saxon reeves; men who swore to do justice and who did it,—men who swore to govern well and who governed righteously."

"Then long life to Longbeard, reeve of London!" said Bamme, at the utmost pitch of his stentorian voice, while all the artisans joined again in the cry, and shouted, "Longbeard for ever!"

"If ye will it," replied Longbeard; "so it may be. But we are wasting time upon a question of dignity. Sir Roger Poyntz has heard your conditions; now what are his, on the part of him who sent him?"

Sir Roger, thus addressed, replied immediately; "Readiness at the appointed hour, with voice and arm, every one of you, to shout long life to the king, and to smite to the earth every man who dares gainsay his right. But the hour is not yet ripe!"

Longbeard waved his hand for silence, anticipating the applause of the assembly. "Will you, Sir Roger Poyntz, put thy hand and seal to this parchment, that we may in the hour of need produce it as received from you?"

"Not I,—by the soul of my father," replied Poyntz, abruptly; "who ever heard of a mere messenger, as I am, taking such power upon himself? And where is the necessity for it? Do you doubt the word of a prince?"

"No, no," said Athelstane; "No, no," re-echoed his friends and sitheundmen; and "no, no," replied Bryan Fitzosbert and the Londoners.

"So far, well," said Poyntz, with a grim smile; "and now ye have only to abide the time and the signal, which will be given you. In the meantime, John, Earl of Moreton, co-regent of the realm of England, may be daily seen in the king's palace of Westminster, where he will always be ready to listen to the complaints, and redress the grievances of his Saxon people,—farewell."

The knight withdrew amid the murmured applauses of the assembly, and the clatter of his horse's hoofs died away in the distance, ere a word was spoken. It was then proposed, that Longbeard, Bryan Fitzosbert, Athelstane, Nicholas Bamme, Egbert the Saxon, and another, should demand a private audience of the Earl of Moreton on the morrow, to learn more of his intentions from his own mouth, and the assembly broke up. Longbeard was left alone with his brother Bryan,

the shouts of "Longbeard, reeve of London," still rung in his ears, and he remained silent,—filled with his own thoughts, and said not a word for several minutes. His reverie was however suddenly interrupted, as will be fully shown in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

"Seigneurs et dames estutez
De un fort tretur orrez!"

Ballad of Thomas Turbelvyl.

"HELP! help!" said a voice, which Longbeard soon recognised as that of Gideon, the apprentice of his friend Jordan the tanner. "Help! help!" and immediately the apprentice burst into the room where the brothers sat, his face flushed, his hair in disorder, and his whole appearance betokening excitement—"help! help!"

"God a mercy on thy soul, man," said Bryan Fitzosbert, "what art thou shouting in that manner for?"

"Help! help!" said Gideon.

"Take breath, friend Gideon," said Longbeard, kindly, "and then tell us what ails thee."

"They're gone! they're gone!" replied Gideon, gasping for breath, which he had lost in the violent run from Jordan's door, on London-bridge, to Longbeard's in Watling-street;—"gone!"

"Who are gone?" said Bryan, shaking him violently, to aid the process of discovery—"tell me, thou rascal, or I'll bruise thee into a pulp!"

"My young mistresses!" said the apprentice, shrinking at the threat.

Longbeard sprang from the ground, as if he had been struck with an arrow; and Bryan let go his hold of the apprentice, in the extremity of his surprise, to the great relief of the young man,—"*Friedolinda and Marian*," he said, recovering his breath and his presence of mind together, "have been stolen away—and my master is beside himself, and quite broken-hearted."

Longbeard betrayed what he felt by no word or outward sign, that the apprentice could discover; but Bryan whose surprise and sorrow were as great as his brother's, saw the subdued emotion in his quick eyes. In an instant they were both in the street, and several yards in advance towards London-bridge, ere the apprentice had moved to follow them.

They found a crowd opposite the tanner's door, and Longbeard was no sooner observed, than every cap was taken off to salute him. The crowd opened to let them pass, and the next moment they were in the presence of Jordan. The father essayed to speak, but there was a sensation of choking in his throat, which, for awhile, prevented him; but he found words at last to reply to the eager inquiries of the brothers. "My children! my children!" said he, grasping Longbeard's hand with ten times his usual energy—"I have been robbed of my children:" and the stout burgher's face, where a tear had not found its way for a quarter of a century, was wet, with the large drops that coursed down it as he spoke—"My only treasures are taken from me. Wilt thou be true to me, William Fitzosbert?"

"Ay, to the death," replied he; "but tell me, how is this? what has happened? and who has done it?"

In broken sentences, and with difficulty, the tanner told his tale.—On the previous night, as he returned from his tan-yard, at Bermondsey, he was waylaid in Southwark, by three men, whom he did not know, carried to a dark place by the river-side, and there gagged and kept a close prisoner till the morning dawn, when he was released. On returning to his house on the bridge, smarting from the sense of injury, and resolved to make complaint of the outrage, he found his house in confusion. Gideon, the apprentice, with a handkerchief in his mouth, tied hand and foot in the lower room, and Bertha, the hand-maid, in a similar condition in the upper. His first thought was, that the house had been robbed; and calling loudly for his daughters, he released poor Gideon and the maid; from whom he learned that his daughters had been carried forcibly away, shortly after midnight, by a party of six men, and themselves bound in the manner already described. They had both heard the splash of oars in the water immediately afterwards, and conjectured that they had been conveyed down the river, and further neither of them could say. He had made every inquiry—he had sent messengers to all parts of London during the day, but could discover nothing of their fate, and had at last dispatched Gideon to the house of Longbeard, for his advice and assistance. "Oh, my poor children," said he, as he finished the story—"if they had taken but one of them—but both my treasures!" and as he spoke, the tears gathered again in his eyes, which seemed to annoy him, for he dashed them off with the back of his huge hand, with a violence that was formidable even to witness.

"Be comforted," said Longbeard, who did not himself feel

the comfort which he was anxious to bestow. "If there is strength in my arm, or justice in England, or a true heart to aid me, I will restore them to you yet."

"Both my treasures!" said the tanner; "if they had taken my Friedolinda only, who is a woman, and sage and wise, and who could protect herself till we discovered her, it would not have been so bad: but my Marian! a child! so young! so innocent! a mere babe! the darling of my heart! the comfort of my old age!—oh! this will kill me! I feel it will!"

Bryan Fitzosbert put his hand to his eyes, and wiped away something; but if it were a tear, nobody saw it; and the next instant, he spoke with a loud, and even a cheerful voice, to the tanner; bade him be of good courage, and all would yet be well; and swore an oath, that he would ransack every nook and hiding-place in broad England, until he discovered his daughters, and brought them back to him unharmed.

"May God bless you," said the tanner; "but I am a fool to be sobbing here, when I should be up and doing. Forgive me, William Fitzosbert. I did not think I was such a child, or that my heart was so soft. I would not that any one but yourself had seen these cowardly drops upon my cheek—but I am better now—you see I am a man again—I am all energy;—but, oh! my Marian! my best, my kindest!—the prop of my old age—my Friedolinda, too!—what did I say? unnatural old wretch that I was! that they might have taken thee, if they had left the other? Fitzosbert, my friend, I did not mean it—I take God to witness I did not!"

"No—no—no," said Longbeard, turning away his head, while he shook the tanner's hand, "we all know your heart, Jordan. But this is the time to act. This outrage is too grievous to be connived at by any authority in the realm. I will apply to the lord high justiciary and the regents—We will offer rewards—We will scour the country—We will search every corner in England."

At this moment two persons entered the room, one of whom had been early informed of the event, and who had been making inquiries in every part of London, and the other had entered by mere chance. The first was the poursuivant and herald, Robert de Robaulx, a suitor for the hand of the fair Marian, as the reader has been already informed, and the quack-doctor, Abra Ben Acadabra.

"Well, Robert, my friend, hast thou discovered any tidings of my Marian,—of my children?" he said, scarcely giving him time to enter, "hast thou learnt nothing of my little ones?"

"Nothing!" replied the herald mournfully, "nothing certain. I have heard, indeed, from some fishermen of

Billingsgate, that cries were heard in a boat this morning down the stream about Greenwich."

"Awell, then;" said the tanner, "and will nobody go to Greenwich for me? 'Tis a chance."

"Ay, but it may not be the best," said Longbeard. "I myself will go to the world's end, if need be, for Friedolinda; but is this all? Art thou sure that thou hast heard nothing else? What kind of a boat was it? What colour was it?"

"I could not find that out," said the herald. "Gideon," he added, turning to the apprentice, "what kind of men were they, and what dress did they wear?"

Gideon's mind was in such a state of confusion that he remembered nothing very distinctly, and he could not say.

"What!" said Longbeard, "couldst thou not recognise any of them if thou sawest them?"

"I think I could, one," replied Gideon, ruefully.

"One, thou dunce!" exclaimed Bryan, "and what one?"

"A sturdy fellow, with black hair, and a grey doublet, who stuffed a handkerchief into my mouth, and threatened to run a knife into my heart if I stirred an inch, and be damned to him!" said the apprentice, with great energy.

"Was there not a young man among them," asked Doctor Abra Ben Acadabra, who had hitherto remained silent, "a very good-looking young man, with small white hands, and very white teeth, and glossy curling locks, and of a fair presence altogether?"

"I think there was," replied Gideon, "I am almost sure there was."

"*Almost* sure!" said Jordan, the tanner, losing patience; "if thou art not quite sure, and that immediately, I will cudgel thee till thou art *almost* dead!"

"For the love of the Virgin!" ejaculated Gideon, "don't, and I will remember if I can."

"Tell us, then," said the quack, "was there not one among them who had a foul smell of musk and lavender?"

"There was one certainly, who had a foul smell. Yes, I see him before me now,—a sort of woman in man's clothes, only that he was desperately strong."

"Then, by the precious relics of the true cross, I know the man," said Abra Ben Acadabra. "What! do none of you remember the Norman knight, William Le Boutelier, who was ducked in the kennel at Smithfield for annoying the damsels? By my faith, I have more sense than any of you," and he laughed aloud at the idea of his own perspicacity.

A ray of light seemed to break in upon them all, and every one thought the suggestion highly probable.

"Down the river too!" exclaimed Bryan. "I know his hold well,—in the merry woods of Kent he is my neighbour. If Sir William Le Boutelier be the man, I'll rescue our lambs from the wolf in a fortnight, and hang the wolf on one of his own trees as an example to his kin!"

Longbeard, who had said little, had thought the more; the suddenness of the blow was so great, that at first he could not see clearly what was to be done or whom to suspect. He had recovered himself, however, and listened eagerly to every thing that was said, sifting the evidence in his own mind, and deciding on the probability or improbability of each suggestion that was offered. "Bryan," said he, to his brother, at last, "it seems likely that William Le Boutelier is the villain who has done us this grievous wrong. But it is not evident that he has left London. Will you undertake the discovery in thy part of the country, while my worthy friend Jordan and myself pursue it here?"

"Ay, will I," replied Bryan, "and immediately."

"Is not the plan good?" inquired Longbeard of the tanner; "thou and I know London well, and every cranny in it and near it. The innocent ones may be hereabouts still, and I have a thousand good trusty fellows at my command to spy them out, and our love will give us wit and energy. If William Le Boutelier have conveyed them down the river, my brother will track him—like a hound the fox. Oh, Friedolinda!" he added, speaking more to himself than to those present, "may some guardian angel watch over thee and keep thee from harm, and give thee the hope that now inspires me, to rescue thee, and shield thee!"

The herald drew Bryan Fitzosbert aside. It was the first time they had met, and each admired the open countenance of the other. Bryan's face was browned with the sun, and the herald's face was fair and ruddy, and candid as the light. He took Bryan's hand, too, which had not been offered, and shook it cordially. "We are rivals," said he; "you love Marian Jordan, and so do I, better than my life; but still, why should we be foes?"

"That depends on you entirely," replied Bryan; "we will be foes or friends, as you wish it."

"Let us be friends, then," said the herald, "and let not our love for an angel make devils of us. We will go together in search of her; and if so happy as to knock out the brains of the villain who has carried her off, and rescue her, she alone shall decide between thee and me; her father shall have nothing to say in the matter; and if she herself tells

me in thy presence that she loves thee best, why I will renounce her at once, and pray that you may both be happy."

"Thou'rt a fine fellow, master Herald de Robaulx," said Bryan, squeezing his hand, "and I wish I had thee in the wild woods with me. By St. Peter! this dull, smoking, miserable city of London does not deserve to possess so fine a soul; but we'll go together."

"Agreed—I've a strong arm, though I do live in a city, and a bold heart, though I say it. I only wish I may have an opportunity to prove both on the body of this Norman popinjay that I've heard so much of."

"No, I have thought better of it; we will go separately; go thou down the stream—inquire at every town, and village, and hamlet, of every fisherman or sailor thou seest. I will go by the land; I know something about this Le Bouteilier, and he knows me; and if he means to take the doves to his own cage, as I suspect, we shall track him either way. We will meet in the merry woods of Blean. Take that whistle," and he handed him a little ivory instrument from his pocket, "and blow it five times, if you want to meet with me in the woods, and I, or some of my friends, will be with thee in as many minutes."

They now joined the tanner and Longbeard, who had also been discoursing with Ben Acadabra, and announced the plan they had formed. The father approved it highly, and Longbeard did the same, and with mutual protestations of zeal, and attempts to comfort the bereaved old man, they all separated, to act their several parts in discovering the fair maidens. Follow we the steps of the Herald de Robaulx.

CHAPTER XIII.

"O gin I had a bonnie ship,
And men to sail wi' me,
It's I wad gang to my true love,
Since she canna come to me!"

Old Song.

"Wandering thus wearily all alone, up and downe,
With a stout miller he met at the last."

The King and the Miller of Mansfield.

THE herald, on leaving those so much and deeply interested in the welfare of the beauteous daughters of the tanner, bent his steps towards the river side, that he might hire a boat

and go in pursuit. Thames-street, at that period, was built only upon the north side, and the intermediate space to the Thames was occupied by itinerant vendors of oaten cakes, cheese, cooked meat, and other edibles, and the houses were partly taverns and partly cook-shops. We learn from Fitzstephen's account of London, written at the latter part of the reign of Henry the Second, or beginning of that of Richard the First, that the public eating-houses were all situated here. "Here, according to the season," [we use the words of Dr. Pegge's translation of this valuable tract,] "might be found victuals of all kinds, roasted, baked, fried, or boiled. Fish, large and small, with coarser viands for the poorer sort, and more delicate ones for the rich, such as venison, fowls, and small birds. In case a friend arrived at a citizen's house, much wearied after a long journey, and chooses not to wait, a-hungred as he is, for the buying and cooking of meat, recourse is immediately had to the Thames-bank above mentioned, where everything desirable is instantly procured. No number so great of knights or strangers can either enter the city, at any hour of day or night, or leave it, but may be all supplied with provisions, so that those have no occasion to fast too long, nor those to depart the city without their dinner. To this place, if they are so disposed, they resort, and there they regale themselves, every man according to his abilities." Thither proceeded the herald, and having entered a wine shop where the boatmen frequented, he called for a horn of sack, and took his seat on the rough unhewn bench that surrounded an equally rough oaken table in the middle of the room. A sturdy-looking mariner being informed of his business, went to the river to see whether oarsmen could be procured for so long a pull. During his absence the herald cast his eyes around on the various individuals who were assembled in the smoky apartment;—smoky, from a large wood fire at one end, which served the guests to roast such delicate morsels of provision as they might have purchased from the booth-keepers outside. Fifteen or twenty persons in all were present, of whom three or four were sailors, and the remainder artisans or shopkeepers of the neighbourhood. At the two remotest corners of the room, there were smaller oaken tables, at which men were seated, drinking the ale or metheglin which the house afforded. A row of goodly butts was stationed in a shed in the rear, from which the hostess, a woman of formidable rotundity, both of form and face, supplied her remedies for the thirst with which all her guests seemed afflicted. In the corner opposite the blazing fire,

there was a stone bench, on which sat a jolly-looking man, quaffing the contents of a capacious horn that had been handed to him by the hostess, and for which payment was neither offered nor expected. This man was one of the inferior order of minstrels, or gleemen, who tuned their harps and their voices in places of public resort for the entertainment of the populace. Several writers, in their anxiety to maintain the high dignity of the poetic character, have asserted, that for many generations after the period in which our story is laid, minstrels only struck the chords to please the ears of dames and knights of high degree. The poor, however, had their bards, gleemen, and story-tellers, as well as the rich, little, perhaps not at all, inferior in their bardly accomplishments to the courtly minstrels, who sang of true love in the bowers of high-born damsels, or of fierce war in the halls of puissant nobles. Of this humble order, was the person alluded to. He was clad in a loose garment of blue linen, which was confined round his middle by a cord; upon his breast he wore a small badge of silver. His beard, which was white as the virgin snow, hung down low upon his breast; and round his head, on which the straggling hair was silvery as his beard, he wore a plain band of black velvet, about half an inch in breadth. He also wore sandals and a pair of leggings of red cloth. De Robaulx was regarding the gleeman with some curiosity, for he thought he had seen him before, he did not know where, when the boatman returned, and informed him, that in less than half an hour, a little fast-sailing cutter, and two men to manage her, would be ready to convey him down the river. The terms were forthwith agreed upon, and De Robaulx, to pass away the intervening time, called for another flagon of ale, and the old gleeman at the same time passed his rapid fingers over the strings of his harp, and appeared as if he were about to favour the guests with a ballad. The hum of conversation ceased, and all the company composed themselves into an attitude of attention. The gleeman again dashed his hand over the strings with the ease and freedom of a master of the instrument, and after preluding for some time, sang a plaintive ballad upon the virtue and the woes of a miserable crusader, who had left his lady-love in England while he fought in Holy Land, and found her false on his return. This ballad met with great applause; and the gleeman, fixing his eye upon the herald, (who had paid great attention to the chant, and regarded the singer with increased curiosity, wondering where he had met him,) began another, to a spirited air, as follows:—

- " Where has the maiden gone,
Far from her lover?
Sad, sad, will he be,
Till her fate he discover.
- " Down with the stream she's gone,
Tearing her tresses,
And shrieking for aid,
From the spoiler's caresses.
- " The maiden is weak,
But the oarsmen are lusty,
The ravisher false,
But his pilot is trusty.
- " So eastward, my gallant youth,
Down the broad river,
Or linger till sunset,
And lose her for ever!"

The first words of the ballad caused the blood to tingle in the cheeks of the herald, and his eyes to open wide with astonishment.

As the song proceeded, his wonder increased. The words were somewhat applicable to the circumstances which had drawn the young man into the present company; but he asked himself how did the minstrel acquire his knowledge, or was his song merely one of those wonderful coincidences which by their singularity so often amuse the philosophic and startle the credulous? De Robaulx was not a little puzzled by the staid and unmoved demeanour of the gleeman, who to all outward appearance seemed totally unconscious that he had chanted anything more than a common ballad, calculated only to amuse, and devoid of application. The applause which the song drew from the assembled company, recalled the herald from his confused reverie on the subject, and he was about to rise and ask the minstrel who he was, and how he came by his knowledge. The minstrel, however, had disappeared. The hostess, who was applied to, could give no information beyond the fact that he was a well-known gleeman, though she could not tell his name, and knew not where he was to be found. De Robaulx bit his lips with vexation at the mysterious disappearance of the bard. After again sounding the hostess as to her knowledge of the gleeman, and receiving the same answer, he followed the mariner to the river-side, still pondering upon the song he had heard. He found the little cutter all ready, and only waiting his arrival. A stock of provisions both edible and potable was laid at the bottom of the boat, and the sail having been hoisted, the travellers proceeded on their voyage. It was near four in the afternoon when they started. Aided by a favour-

able breeze, the little boat went merrily through the waters, with the occasional help of the oarsmen, who used their exertions in impelling it onward in the numerous bends of the river where they were unable to take advantage of the wind. They hailed on their passage the crews of the several craft they met, to know if they had seen anything of a skiff containing two young women. Their inquiries were for the most part greeted with bursts of merriment, in which De Robaulx was far from joining. All the description he was able to give of the boat and her passengers, was assuredly of the vaguest, and they could gain no tidings whatever of the object of their pursuit. They inquired also at the various landing-places on both shores of the stream, and here they acquired, at least, some negative information which was valuable—namely, that no boat containing above two persons, and neither of those of the softer sex, had put in at any of them during the two preceding days. This was something, as it showed the necessity of still continuing down the stream, as the herald somehow or other could not for an instant surmise that they might be on the wrong track. When they had reached Woolwich, they again inquired of a man on board a small fishing vessel, whether he had seen anything of a boat containing several men, who were conveying two young women away against their will. The man answered that he had neither seen nor heard anything of any women, but that about two hours previously, he had picked up a handkerchief which had probably fallen from some vessel, and which might belong to one of the ladies of whom they were in search. The herald eagerly requested to see it. The man, however, said that he had stowed it away somewhere, he did not recollect where.—De Robaulx begged of him to search, which he did, but in vain—the handkerchief was not to be found.

“For God’s sake and the holy Virgin’s,” said the herald, “look again more closely :” and he held up a piece of silver between his finger and his thumb, as an incentive to the man’s exertions. It operated as silver often, and as gold always operates, and in two minutes the kerchief was discovered in the fisherman’s own pocket. De Robaulx no sooner beheld it, than he pressed it several times eagerly to his lips, and then transferred it to his bosom, at the same time calling out to the boatmen to row with all their might, and he would double the fee he had previously stipulated to give them. The men thus encouraged, went gaily to work, and proceeded rapidly down the river, with the wind still in their favour. The tide, however, had begun to flow, and night was fast approaching ; and one of the rowers, apparently a knowing one, began to cast his eyes wistfully around him,

to scan the appearance of the heavens. In answer to the inquiries of De Robaulx, he said that he apprehended a squall, and advised that they should put into the nearest port. Just at that moment, the herald caught a glimpse of a boat in the distance, which appeared to be swiftly sailing in the same direction as their own, and he would listen to no suggestions of stopping until they had overtaken it, were all the elements to wreak their fury upon them in the attempt. The promise of additional reward silenced the murmurs of the watermen. Large drops of rain, however, began to fall, the clouds were driving rapidly over the sky, and the grey of twilight was fast deepening into the darker hue of night. The impatient herald paid no attention to the wind or the rain; but the boatmen, who were somewhat less eager, ventured to give a hint or two on the impolicy of braving the approaching storm. The herald looked at them so imploringly, and appealed so eloquently, aiding his eloquence by the promise of reward, that they held their peace. All that he wished was, that they should overtake the boat which was tripping rapidly over the waters about two miles in advance of them. In spite of the speed with which they breasted the advancing tide, they did not, however, seem to gain sensibly upon the object of their pursuit. The small driving vapours had by this time passed over, and had made way for one immense and continuous cloud, which covered the whole heaven, and from whose bosom the rain began to descend in large, quick drops. The wind also commenced a melancholy moaning among the tall bulrushes that grew along the shore, and the watermen began to look discontented. De Robaulx was wound up to a pitch of the utmost excitement by the chase, and again offered to double or triple their reward, if they would but continue till they overtook the boat, which at this time was not more than a mile ahead.

By the time they had reached Northfleet, the strenuous exertions of the boatmen enabled them to come abreast of the vessel which had led them so weary a chase. Bitter was the mortification of the herald to find that it was no more than a little fishing-boat, containing only one man and a boy. To add to his disappointment, the man could give him no information. The storm now began to howl about them in good earnest, and the fast-descending rain was drenching them to the skin. One of the boatmen, after bestowing a hearty curse upon the fisherman and his boy, now recommended that they should seek refuge on shore. To this reasonable proposition, De Robaulx could no longer refuse his assent, especially when the waterman swore by all his

gods that no boat could stay out in such weather. He added, that as the boat they were in pursuit of had not passed the fisherman, it had, in all probability, landed its passengers at the opposite village. This was another ray of hope for the herald, and thitherwards the rowers accordingly turned the head of their boat. They soon effected a landing at Greenhithe, which, at that early period, was a village of some importance. Dripping with rain, our adventurer sought admittance into the first house he came to—a wretched hut, containing but one room, inhabited by a mariner, and his family of a wife and half-a-dozen children. They had, however, a comfortable fire, and this was the one thing needful under the present circumstances of the herald. While he was drying his garments, the mariner's wife, in answer to his inquiries, informed him, that eight hours previously, a party of men, with two ladies, had landed from a skiff, and having procured horses, which she believed were in waiting for them, had, without further stoppage, ridden southward. The herald at first resolved to pursue them without delay. He would not be persuaded even to stop that night, to set out again with renewed vigour on the morrow; but hunger, and thirst, and fatigue soon made him change his resolution. There were two separate persons within him—the weary traveller and the lover. The weary traveller talked so much good sense on the folly of riding on amid storm and darkness, to overtake people who had nearly a day's start of him, that the lover was convinced, and he at last made up his mind to pass the night in the village.

The mariner's eldest son, a youth of fourteen, was dispatched, to endeavour to procure better accommodation for the stranger than that afforded in his father's dwelling; while another went to the boat for some of the provisions with which he had taken care to provide himself before his departure. These were soon brought by one of the boatmen, who was paid his hire and his reward, and dismissed. The herald sat himself down on a three-legged stool, (one of the best pieces of furniture in the apartment,) and did speedy execution upon the substantial fare that was displayed before him when the baskets were unloaded. The youth who had been to procure a lodging, soon returned with the information, that he could be accommodated hard-by, in the house of one Roger Tyke, a brewer and miller, who had agreed, without the prospect of fee or reward, to give up one of his best rooms to the storm-beaten stranger. This offer was joyfully accepted, and the herald, with the boy as his guide, set out for the residence of the hospitable brewer.

The brewer's house was a comfortable-looking tenement, and betokened the comparative affluence of the owner. The door was opened at the first knock, and the traveller found himself in a spacious room, enlivened by a roaring fire, and a table spread with a plentiful supper. The brewer rose from his seat by the fire to welcome him. He was a short, thick-set, bandy-legged personage, with a red nose, and a formidable obliquity of vision. He wore his garments about him in the most ungainly fashion, and his long, straight, sandy-grey hair hung over his low unwrinkled forehead. Though the individual parts, members, and features of his body were separately ugly, yet they formed a whole by no means disagreeable. Ineffable good nature twinkled in his oblique eyes, and a smile of habitual philanthropy dwelt on his brown cheek. Roger Tyke was the very beau-ideal of coarse kindness, and the most free hospitable yeoman in all the county of Kent, and, withal, a maltster whose reputation for brewing good liquor extended far and wide.

"Take off your soaking doublet," said the brewer, assisting his guest to strip off his garments, which had received but little diminution of their superabundant moisture in the hut of the fisherman. "Holla there! Margery Tyke," he continued, at the very top of his voice, and his spouse, a stout hale woman of fifty, entered at the call. "Bring hither a pair of my best woollen hose, and a warm doublet of my best brown cloth—and be quick."

"Nay, nay," said the herald, "I am very grateful for the shelter of your roof, and the warm glow of your hearth. I will not put you to further trouble."

"Ah, welladay!" said Roger Tyke, "the time was when folks were not so squeamish. Zounds! you would not change my good opinion of you?" This was uttered in so querulous, and yet so good-humoured a tone, and the expression of the brewer's face, as he looked apparently at empty air, but in reality at his guest, was so ludicrous, that the herald could not repress a smile.

"Ay, ay,—laugh away," continued honest Roger; "be merry,—that's my plan, and never refuse a good offer. You don't mean seriously that you would refuse my warm comfortable garments, when you stand there, like a pinar of ice, thawing away as if my fire were too fierce for you."

"It would be a sin to refuse—by the mass it would!" said De Robaulx; "and I'll not refuse anything you offer; there's my hand upon it."

"You're a man of sense—one after my own heart!" exclaimed honest Tyke, taking hold of the herald's hand, and

squeezing it forcibly between his ; "there's some virtue in the world yet ; so sit you down, and we'll have a carouse !"

"Zounds! my hearty old fellow," said De Robaulx ; "'twas a lucky star that guided me hither, and we *will* have a carouse. By the pope's toe, as you say !"

In spite of his anxiety, the herald had by this time found it best to accommodate himself to the society into which he had fallen, and he sat down to table with great glee. Margery Tyke soon brought the warm woollen garments, with which our wayfarer ensconced himself right willingly. The herald, although he had supped already, never, as he said, refused a good offer ; so he resolved to sup again, and the trio sat down and commenced operations.

"You have had moisture enough on your outside," said Tyke, "so we'll now put a little inside. What is your liquor? I have some beer—of my own brewing—the genuine nut-brown, and not to be equalled in Christendom. We'll have a tankard of it."

"By the mass," said the herald, who relished the character of his host ; "let's have two,—we'll not be satisfied with one."

"Let's have three,—one a piece, and one over," said the brewer, while his oblique eyes almost sparkled themselves straight with satisfaction ; "may I descend a thousand leagues into the pit of Tophet," added he, clenching his hairy fist upon the table ; "if you are not an honest fellow. Hollo, there! Phebe! where's Phebe?"

Phebe at this moment entered the room, and received instructions to open the cellar and bring a few jugs of his very best nut-brown ale. She tripped away to execute the order, and the eyes of the young man followed her,—and not without reason, for Phebe Tyke, the brewer's only daughter, was the beauty of the district. She was about sixteen years of age, and as the French would say, *faite à ravir*. Her eyes and hair were black. The former sparkled with all the brilliancy which usually attends eyes of that colour, and the latter fell in glossy curls over her graceful white neck, occasionally straggling over the brilliant carnation of her cheeks. Her teeth were unrivalled both for whiteness and regularity, her mouth was rosy and amorous, and her nose, though not classical, was certainly as beautiful as the rest of her features. A severe critic in matters of female loveliness, would no doubt have objected to the size of her hands, which evidently showed that their fair owner had taken a due share of the management of her father's household affairs. This, however, was no objection to the pretty Phebe in the minds of the lads of the village ; and the lasses prudently said nothing upon the

subject. Phebe shortly reappeared with the sparkling liquor, which she smilingly deposited on the table and withdrew. The brewer and his guest passed a pleasant evening, mutually pleased with each other, but though De Robaulx often turned his eyes anxiously towards the door, the pretty Phebe was not seen again that evening.

CHAPTER XIV.

“And you shall be the best harper
That ever took harpe in hand;
And I will be the best singer
That ever sang in this lande.

“It shall be written on our foreheads
All and in grammarye,
That we two are the boldest men
That are in all Christentye.”

King Estmere.

THE morning sun dawned brightly after the rains of the preceding night, and our traveller was awakened by its beams, which shone full in his face. The hospitality of his jovial host on the over-night—the fresh clean couch and pleasant room, and his own fatigue, had combined to dispose the herald to sleep, and he had dreamed all night—capricious and changeable man,—not of the charms of Marian Jordan, of whom he had thought all day, but of the newer charms of Phebe Tyke. To tell the truth, the herald was not a model of constancy; he was none of your faithful lovers, but one of those ardent admirers of beauty in general, who doat upon it most in the newest face, and think their hearts irretrievably lost to one enslaver, only until they are captivated by another. And with the herald, a grand ingredient in the composition of true beauty, was kindness; and Phebe had, without exception, the kindest and most winning smile he had ever witnessed; and what increased its value in his eyes, it had fallen upon him more than once. Thus, when he descended in the morning to the brewer's room, his thoughts, since the truth must be told, were pretty equally divided between Marian Jordan and Phebe Tyke, and by the time he had sat there five minutes, the division was no longer equal, and Phebe had the largest share.

Roger Tyke had prepared a breakfast for his guest, which might have been called a dinner, if it had received its name from the abundance or the quality of the fare, instead of taking it from the time at which it was to be eaten. The brewer,

as they sat over it, told him that he had been making inquiries for him during the morning, and had ascertained that a party of four or five men and one or two women, he could not discover which, all mounted upon fleet steeds, had ridden, on the previous day, as fast as their horses could carry them, in the direction of Rochester, and that he would lend him a steed as fleet as theirs to pursue them. The herald accepted his offer, and was thanking him in the warmest terms, when the brewer stopped him. "Is it not very strange," said he, "that a man can't please himself without being be-slavered with thanks for it? By the Pope, I have been doing myself a kindness, and not you; so no more, an' you love me!"

"By the Pope, then, thou'rt a fine fellow," replied De Robaulx, "and there's no doubt of it. Canst tell me whether one Fitzosbert dwells about these parts?"

"Never heard of him," returned the brewer.

"He told me he was known all over the county of Kent," said the herald.

"What is he?" inquired the brewer. "I think I know every man of note in the county, but I never heard of this one."

"I hardly know what he is; I think a sort of huntsman, who dwells in the woods hereabouts; wears a green jerkin—shoots well with a cross-bow—breaks the forest laws, and has been condemned, if I mistake not, to have his eyes bored out, if not to be hanged, for making too free with the king's deer."

"There are such in the county of Kent—more than one, as I can testify," said the brewer; "but I know not him of whom you speak. Perhaps he is one of the men of the renowned Bryan Brownbuskin."

"Bryan Brownbuskin!" ejaculated the herald, "and who's he? The man I want is Bryan Fitzosbert."

"There is but one Bryan," returned the brewer, squinting most furiously at the herald, "and he is called Bryan Brownbuskin; but tell me," he added, sinking his voice to a whisper, "art thou a friend or a foe? If thou'rt a friend of his, I will tell thee where thou mayst find him; if a foe, I would not do my guest such disservice; he would make an apple of thee, man, and hang thee from a tree, if thou wert fool-hardy enough to venture into his dominions."

"Oh, a friend—a friend!" said the herald.

"Then thou mayst find him in the woods somewhere between Folkestone and Faversham, the bounds of his domains from south to north; or between Deal and Maid-

stone, his bounds from east to west. A merry man is he to his friends, I ween, and a weary one to his foes."

"Ah, well!" said the herald, "I shall find him, I dare say; but where is your fair daughter this morning? Shall I not see the bright Phebe once more before my departure?"

The father had scarcely time to answer the inquiry, ere the maiden herself made her appearance, all radiant as the fresh May morning. The herald, although a man not much given to blushing, felt his cheeks tingle as she took her place beside him. The conversation, just before so animated, suddenly languished; but Phebe, who was a keen observer, was not displeased to discover the stolen and admiring glances which the herald turned toward her. She had not been five minutes by his side before she had divined the cause "that made him so bashful and so grave."

The brewer noticed the herald's abstraction, but was not quite so clear-sighted as his daughter in discovering the reason, and the breakfast passed over in comparative silence. The traveller took a cordial farewell of his host, and at his earnest solicitation, promised to let him know the result of his pursuit. The herald also bade his adieu to the pretty Phebe, and obtained a sort of half confession that she would be glad to see him again, if circumstances permitted. The parting kiss, which universal custom permitted him to imprint upon her hand, kindled a flame in his heart, which made the love he had cherished for Marian grow cold in comparison. The brewer came out to the door, where the horse was awaiting its rider, and holding out the stirrup-cup, he once more gave him a hearty shake of the hand, and wished him a prosperous journey.

De Robaulx rode speedily on towards Rochester, but twice or thrice turned back his head, and fancied each time that he saw a fair maiden at the brewer's door, waving her handkerchief to him. The road, however, was not straight, and in a few minutes the herald caught himself sighing, when he once more looked round, and found that the brewer's cot, and its lovely inmate, were hidden from his view. The morning was beautiful—one of those days, when the mind seems lightened of every load; when the spirit, as if imbued with the glory of the sunshine, and the elasticity of the luxurious air, feels that it is allied to the great Spirit of the universe. The wind, as it blew fresh and invigorating in his face, was laden with all the perfume of the spring. The wild chestnut-tree, greener than all the trees around it, had unfolded its tapering and graceful blossoms to the sun; and the apple-tree, rivalling it in beauty, and surpassing it in promise, was

covered with the sweet white flowers, of which a modern French poet so charmingly sings :—

“ Le beau pommier si fier de ses fleurs étoilées,
Neige odorante du printemps.”

Not only were the sights delightful which pressed upon the traveller, as he passed onwards—the sounds also came upon his ears, sweet as the notes of stringed instruments. The breeze among the branches made a music of its own, and the streams, swollen by the rains of the preceding night, rushed merrily over their stony beds, and increased the harmony. There was also a glorious musician, high up in the air, “unseen, but not unheard.” And as its song floated over all the visible space before them, De Robaulx thought that so much music must proceed from a whole choir of larks, instead of from one. Now the notes seemed high over-head—the next instant they seemed to be wafted from a distance—from the right, from the left—from everywhere at once. The cuckoo, also, hidden in thickets green, uttered his sweet invariable song ; and the thrush, the blackbird, and the goldfinch, all lent their little aid to swell the tide of harmony of the morning hymn which nature was at that instant singing to its great Creator.

The herald whistled as he went, or hummed an old song in praise of bright eyes, and in deprecation of their cruelty. No one, to have seen or heard him, would have imagined the errand he was on, or thought him any but the most careless and light-hearted cavalier in existence. Sometimes he would stop in his low chant to speak to his horse, and pat its neck ; then he would look to the good sword at his side when he came to any part of the road that seemed rather more lonely than the rest ; and then he would sing or whistle again—Marian and her charms being now foremost in his mind ; and anon, Phebe Tyke, and her cherry-cheeks, her laughing face, and her plump arms. In the course of an hour, journeying onwards thus, he reached Gad’s-hill, and giving loose rein to his steed, he allowed him to mount it at its own free will. And then descending as leisurely, he admired the beautiful landscape that lay stretched beneath him—the blue clear Medway, with its banks clothed with verdure, running like a vein athwart it. Beneath him lay the dark and frowning castle of Rochester, overlooking the small town at its foot, and guarding both it and the bright stream on which it was seated from the assaults of the foeman. The cathedral rose alongside of it—and in that view were typified almost all the then phases of English life. The frowning castle for the soldier—the solemn cathedral for the priest—the little insignificant town

for the people—depending for its very existence on the other two—and the thick woods around, where Bryan Fitzosbert and his men devoted themselves to the perilous life of the hunter.

About half-way down towards the hill, the herald discovered a man on foot trudging lustily on before him. He immediately set spurs to his horse, and soon came up with him. He at once recognised his old acquaintance the gleeman—the very man of all others he was glad to find ; but the gleeman, on his part, showed no signs of recognition. He wore his usual robe of blue linen, fastened round the middle by a leathern belt, and a cloth cap upon his head, from under which the long white locks fell down upon his shoulders. At his back was slung an instrument somewhat resembling a guitar—the badge of his profession as a wandering minstrel. In his hand he carried a thick oaken cudgel, not to help him along the road, for he was strong enough to do without such aid, although his years were three-score and ten, but as a means of defence ; and he now and then flourished it about him as he went, breaking off the thistle-heads by the roadside with great dexterity.

“Wéll met, sir minstrel,” said the herald, as he came up with him ; “by my faith, you walk well for a man of your years. Fortunate be the hour I saw you.”

“Amen,” said the gleeman ; “but never talk of years, man,—’ods, what are three-score and ten?—a mere nothing. Art thou going over the ferry?”

“Yes,” replied the herald ; “and if thou art going over too, we’ll go together, and I’ll make thy better acquaintance on the way. I’ve seen thee twice before, or I’m much mistaken—though beshrew me if I can remember where I saw thee first!”

“What, hast thou forgotten the fat monk in the kitchen of my lord chief justiciary in the monastery of St. Augustine? when thou wert charged with a silly message from those silly folk the thick-headed burghers of London? ’Tis a shame for a young man not to have a better memory.”

“I crave thy pardon, sir troubadour ; I remember thee well : that was a brave song thou didst sing in Thames-street—didst make it thyself?”

“Ay, did I,” replied the gleeman ; “and what of that?”

“Why, this—that thou must know something of two of the fairest maids in England, who have been carried away by some false ravisher.”

“Nothing, by our Lady,” said the gleeman—“nothing but what I heard, and what thou wouldst have heard too, if thou

hadst made proper inquiries. But whither art thou bound now?—still in pursuit?”

“Perhaps I am in pursuit,” said the herald; “but whither art thou bound? Tell me that first, ere I tell thee.”

“Oh, I’m bound anywhere,” said the gleeman; “I go as the birds go, wherever they can get corn for their singing. But I can tell thee this,—if thou dost not know these parts well, they are not very safe for lonely travellers, and my protection would be worth that of twenty men to thee.”

“I doubt it not,” said the herald, who knew the respect with which the minstrels were universally received in that age, even by the fiercest freebooter; “but I’m not afraid,—I’ve a good sword that will do for two or three assailants; and if they come in greater numbers,—why, I’ve a fleet horse.”

“Very true,” said the gleeman; “so let it be as thou likest; thy bones are thine own, and thy head too for the present,—thou mightest have had a worse offer.”

“I know it, and I accept it,—and thou shalt be my guide to Blean Wood, if that piece of silver will repay thee,” and he tendered a coin as he spoke.

The old gleeman did not refuse the money; but put it carefully into a leathern pouch which he drew from his bosom, and then deposited carefully again in its hiding-place. “And so thou art going to Blean,” said he; “I could have guessed as much. Thou art not the only man in all this world who thinks that the prettiest wench ever born into it is Marian Jordan.”

“Why how now!” thought the herald; “this gleeman is either a wizard or a friend of Bryan Fitzosbert;—but I’m not afraid of him in the first case, and in the second, I can make him mine. “Thou speakest truly,” he added aloud; “and I see it is decreed that we should journey together. Didst ever see the maiden?”

“Never,” said the gleeman.

“Then thou hast not seen the fairest sight in all creation,” replied the herald; “at least one of the fairest,” he added, as the remembrance of the blooming Phebe came over him; “and tell me, dost thou know Fitzosbert, a great man in these parts?”

“Never heard of him,” replied the gleeman.

“By all the saints, it is strange, then,” said the herald, half to himself, and half aloud,—“but I’ll get to the bottom of thy secrets yet, sir minstrel, or I’m no true man.”

They proceeded in silence for a short time, the herald restraining his steed that it might not outstrip the sturdy

pace of the gleeman, and they arrived in this manner at the Medway. They were ferried across with short delay, and having answered the questions of the warder at Rochester Castle to the satisfaction of the latter, they proceeded leisurely through the ancient city, without stopping to refresh themselves, and in a few minutes were again on the high road towards Canterbury. They journeyed on till about noon, when they struck into the woods, the gleeman leading the way; the herald all the while debating within himself how he should best become acquainted with the character of the old man, and learn how he had acquired so much knowledge of his affairs. As they turned out of the road, the afternoon sun shone brightly on the tall trees of the forest, whose leafy thickness intercepting the beams, allowed only a few straggling rays to reach the greensward beneath.

The ground was in some parts still covered with the rotten leaves of the last year, but the glory of the woods was again returning. The oaks alone had not put on their full summer vestments. No cloud obscured the clearness of the skies, and all nature seemed to be rejoicing in the beauty of the weather. In the shade might be heard the occasional squeak of the nimble squirrel, as he bounded lightly from bough to bough, or run up the trunks of some aged tree. The tiny hammering of the woodpecker was also audible, as it bored into the sap of the oak; and, now and then, the solemn and aristocratic cawing of a rook was heard, as the beautiful bird swept proudly and slowly over the tops of the trees. The bee flew busily by, and with his musical but drowsy hum seemed inviting nature to a repose which he himself was too industrious to seek. A green lane wound tortuously in the depths of the forest, which extended over all the country between Maidstone and Canterbury to the Medway and the sea. Through this lane the gleeman led the way, flourishing his cudgel as he went, to the great admiration of the herald, who had never before seen such strength in an old man.

"By my troth, sir minstrel, you seem to be a troubadour of the right sort," said he; "one that can not only pipe, but fight upon occasion."

For all reply, the old man struck his cudgel against a tree, and brought down a branch which might have been three inches in diameter.

"That was a stout stroke for a man of your years," said his companion.

"Pshaw!" said the other, "what do you mean by years?—what are three-score and ten? In the free air, with a sound constitution, a bold heart, and abundance of beef and

ale, I can see no reason why a man should not live to be a hundred and fifty!"

"Now, by the mass, that's moderate!" said the herald, with a laugh. "However, there's no chance of my lasting so long,—I am now half dead with hunger and thirst!"

"Sayst thou so!" said the gleeman; "seest thou yon little opening by the way-side? Yonder is a spring of clear water, and a shady bank to repose on. I have a flagon of good liquor in my wallet."

"How many flagons did you say? one? That were a poor allowance for two thirsty travellers such as we."

"Then we will dilute it," said the other; "there is plenty of water at the place I told you of."

"Curse your dilution!" returned De Robaulx. "But stay, methinks I have something in my saddle bags, the gift of my good friend Tyke," he continued, drawing out first a cold fowl, then a ham, and then a piece of beef; "but there is no liquor to do honour to the good victuals."

"Wont water content ye?" said the minstrel.

"It must, sir troubadour; so we'll e'en make the best of it, and keep thy flagon for a finish."

By this time they had arrived at the little dell alluded to by the minstrel. De Robaulx having alighted, tied his horse to a tree. Having carried his helmet full of water for the refreshment of the animal, and ransacked his saddle-bags of their contents, he sat down beside his companion. Their repast was quickly begun; the good things disappeared with wonderful rapidity, and the gleeman, drawing a drinking-horn from his wallet, filled it to the brim with wine from the flagon.

"I always carry these conveniences with me. So, here's my service to you, sir herald, and may we become better acquainted." So saying, he took one long draught, and set the horn on the ground. Having filled it once more, the flagon was empty.

"Here's success to thy love, sir herald," said he, with a sly look, and again quaffing to the dregs the contents of the horn, he pushed it empty towards his companion.

The herald dropped the wing of a fowl which he was about to demolish, and stared at the old man with a look of mingled surprise, indignation, and horror. "By the mass! and that was uncourteous, sir minstrel—thou art worse than a Pagan, or a Jew. What! hast thou no religion in thee? Wert thou not old enough to be my grandfather, I'd have a joust with thee on the greensward, and just run my sword's point into thy glutton ribs, by way of teaching thee more civility!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted the old man, and his provoking laugh was echoed and re-echoed in the recesses of the forest. "Ha! ha! sir herald; thou in love, forsooth! Why, man, thou shouldst despise both meat and drink, an' thou wert in love properly! The wing of a chicken ought to be quite sustenance enough to last thee for a week! Your true lover should eat little and drink less. But seriously, if thou hast a mind for a turn on the sward, by way of whet to your appetite, I am willing."

"Pooh! thou art too old," returned the herald; "even wert thou young enough, I'd not dishonour my sword by sticking it into thy vile glutton body—a mere pouch to contain puddle."

"Then suppose I break one of thy bones," said the gleeman, flourishing his bludgeon; "perhaps that will satisfy thee."

"Of a truth, monstrously condescending! So if it please thee, we'll just prepare, and I'll run my sword to the hilt into thy greedy stomach."

"I crave thy mercy—we'll finish our meal first. But dost see yon tree?" continued he, pointing with his cudgel to a large oak opposite the spot where they were sitting. "Step over the brook—take this dagger, and dig at the roots of it."

"Dig yourself!" said the herald, "thou'rt strong enough, and churl enough."

"Ah, well," returned the other, "'twill give me a better appetite for the remainder of thy provision. So, fare thee well an instant, sir herald."

The old man sprang nimbly across the rivulet, and with the little dirk which he had used in carving the repast, he began to turn up rapidly the ground beneath the tree which he had specified. De Robaulx thought his companion was mad, and began to watch his proceedings with some curiosity; at the same time, however, continuing his meal with unabated eagerness, for his morning's ride had made him hungry. In a few minutes the gleeman ceased his labour, and, stooping down, drew forth a large stone bottle, and then another, which he threw over the brook to, or rather at, his companion.

"Let there be peace between us, most valiant sir; or at least, a truce, to last as long as the contents of these pitchers."

The herald seized hold of one of the ponderous flasks, and pouring the contents into the minstrel's horn, soon convinced himself of the excellence of the liquor. "Nay, an' thou diggest to such good purpose, I'll e'en come over and assist," said De Robaulx, striding over the rivulet and peering down

into the excavation, where he quickly discovered two additional flagons, which, by his exertions, were detached from their hiding-places in a moment.

"By the holy St. Paul and St. Peter, but thou seemest to know this forest well, sir troubadour! Thou hast been a rare fellow in thy time, I warrant me, to be so good a companion at three-score and ten. Good liquor never comes too late; so here's to thee, my valiant sir minstrel!" continued he, as he emptied at one gulp the capacious horn. "Its sojourn in the bowels of the earth seems mightily to have improved its flavour!"

The two again sat down by the clear brook which babbled by, and in a few minutes there were but small remains of the good cheer that once owned Roger Tyke for its master. "Thou art a prudent man, and a jolly," said De Robaulx, "and a very excellent travelling companion. Suppose now, ere we proceed any further, that thou wert to give me a specimen of thy powers as a minstrel. Sing me a song of Provence; such a song as this," and the herald began to chant the following:—

"Quar quant li buen Roi Karlemaigne,
Eut toute mise a seu domaine,
Provence qui meult iert plentive,
De vins, de bois——"

"Pooh!" said the gleeman, interrupting him; "I don't fancy those French songs,—nothing but love, and wine, and scorn, and frowns, and trumpery about Karlemain! What was Karlemain to Alfred? If thou wilt hear me sing, I will sing a song of the Saxon wild-woods."

"With all my heart," said the herald; "and a very appropriate place to sing it in."

The old man unslung the instrument which was hanging at his back, and preluding for a few moments on the strings, began to sing in a stentorian voice, an ancient ditty, of which the words in our modern English might run nearly as follow:

"The monk may be happy, hid under his hood,
But happier we in the good greenwood!
No liege's law, no master's beck,
Can put a yoke round the freeman's neck,
Who roams with us in the woods of holly,
Drinking the nut-brown ale so jolly!
To the knight his sword! to the monk his hood!
But freedom to us in the good greenwood!"

Hardly had the minstrel finished this rough strain, when a dozen voices shouted in chorus,

"To the knight his sword! to the monk his hood!
And freedom to us in the good greenwood!"

"Hollo! sir minstrel," said De Robaulx, starting to his feet; "who in the name of holy Paul have we here? Canst hide men under a tree as well as liquor? My service to you, my friends," continued the good-natured herald, as about a dozen stout fellows clad in a uniform of black and green, came skipping through the brushwood, and from behind the trees. "A goodly company i'faith! But I pray you, tell me, have any of you seen the old minstrel, whose song seems to have brought you hither?" continued he, perceiving that that personage had suddenly disappeared.

"What sort of a man was he?" said one of the new comers, and who appeared to be the leader of the band.

"As stout an old vagabond as I ever clapped eyes on," returned the herald; "with a voice like thunder, a hand like a hammer, and a stomach as capacious as that of a wild beast which has fasted a fortnight."

"Old John-o'-the-Dingle," said another of the band; "we know him well,—and I prithee, who art thou, and whither bound? art a knight or a villein? a Norman or a Saxon?"

"Neither knight nor villein," said De Robaulx; "and neither Norman nor Saxon, but something of each."

"Whoever thou art," returned the man, "thou art our prisoner, so put down thy sword and come along."

"Not till we have a fight for it, will I be any man's prisoner," exclaimed De Robaulx, suddenly jumping on to his steed, which was as suddenly caught by the bridle by one of the men, while his sword was at the same time wrested from his grasp by another. De Robaulx, thus powerless, remembered the whistle he had received from Bryan Fitzosbert, and instantly resolved to see whether it could bring any one to his aid. He blew it lustily, as directed, and as the sounds echoed through and through the mazes of the forest, he noticed that his assailants seemed confused, and looked inquiringly into each other's faces. In another minute, half-a-dozen more, clad also in green, and bearing cross-bows, appeared on the spot, to the no small surprise of the herald; "Gad a' mercy," quoth he, resigning himself to his fate; "I'm in a bad predicament,—I called for my friends and I've brought more enemies upon me."

"Didst thou blow that whistle?" said one of the new comers.

"Ay, marry did I," answered the herald.

"And who gave it thee, and told thee how to use it?"

"One Bryan Fitzosbert,—the best friend I have in the world; I would give a thousand marks to see him at this moment."

"And why, in the name of Satan," said one of the first comers, "did you not tell us that at first?"

"How could I," replied the herald, as the truth flashed upon him, that these were Bryan's men; "but since you know it now, I pray you lead me to him, and give me my sword again."

The weapon was instantly restored, and the herald was treated with the utmost possible courtesy. The party immediately struck into one of the deepest mazes—one of the hunters leading the horse. After a walk of about half-an-hour through the underwood, the pathway again became visible. They were still in the very heart of the forest, and the sun had sunk down towards the west. The lengthened shadows cast by the trees and by the advancing party, proclaimed the near approach of twilight. Already the breeze began to blow with a more refreshing breath, and the wild flowers of the woodland to emit a more fragrant perfume. A few minutes more, and they entered a deep glade of the forest, where the scene that presented itself to the eyes of the herald was picturesque in the extreme. A fire, made of large branches of the pine and fir, was burning brightly in the midst of the open space, emitting a dense pillar of smoke, which rolled away in black folds above the tops of the trees. Around this fire were scattered, some standing, some sitting, and others lying at full length on the greensward, between twenty and thirty men dressed in the same uniform as those who had formed the escort of De Robaulx. The whole place was redolent of a savoury smell, which the herald soon ascertained to proceed from the carcass of a fat buck, which was roasting whole by the huge fire. He was contemplating the scene with all the interest which its novelty was so well calculated to inspire, when several of the men came towards him. The next instant, he beheld Bryan Fitzosbert, and received a hearty shake from the hand of the forester.

CHAPTER XV

"Wherefore should I love thee?
Proud, base, accurst, alien to love and me!"

ANON.

WHEN the herald and Bryan Fitzosbert had exchanged their first salutations, each acquainted the other with his non-success in discovering any certain intelligence of the fair daughters of the tanner. But the suspicions of the hunter had acquired additional strength, that Sir William Le Boutelier was their ravisher, and that his castle of Willenden, on the Medway, was the spot whither he had conveyed them. Many little circumstances which he had been told by the country people, in his journey from London to Blean Forest had, taken altogether, impressed him with this belief; and the herald agreeing in his suspicions, it was resolved between them, that some one should be sent to Willenden, who might, by artifice, discover the truth from some of the neighbours or retainers of the Norman. The old gleeman was the person selected for this mission; and it was arranged also that the herald should accompany him; and it being once certainly ascertained that the maidens were in the power of Le Boutelier, a plan might be adopted to rescue them. The herald willingly entered into the scheme—he was fond of adventure—he was anxious to discover the fate of the beautiful Marian, whom he at times fancied that he loved to desperation, until the rival beauties of Phebe Tyke floated before his imagination. Who shall fathom the secrets of another's heart? No man knows his own: and the herald, if he had been asked to explain his feelings, and motives, and actions, would have been somewhat at a loss, either to understand them himself, or to have made any one else understand them. Though he fancied he was in love, he did not look upon Bryan Fitzosbert with any jealousy; and if any one had accused him of a growing partiality for Phebe, he would have demed it instantly, and with great sincerity. However he might think, he eagerly entered into the plans of the hunter, and on the following morning set out, with the old gleeman for his guide, to the castle of Willenden.

Leaving them to make their way thither, at their leisure, let us detail the adventures that up to this time had befallen the fair Friedolinda and her sister Marian. As had been first suspected by their old acquaintance, Abra Ben Acadabra, their abducer was indeed William Le Boutelier, the slim,

elegant, and apparently effeminate, but in reality bold, passionate, and daring cavalier. He had long looked with intense admiration on the beauty of Friedolinda—her very scorn seemed lovely in his eyes; and for months before the punishment he had suffered from the rude hands of the people in Smithfield, he had striven to make himself agreeable to her;—he had continually placed himself in her way—had serenaded her windows—had waylaid her in the streets, until to Friedolinda the persecution became a source of continual alarm and anguish. His late mishap in Smithfield, while it had not diminished his intense admiration of her beauty, had wounded his pride; and he not only burned with love, but, strange as it may seem, he thirsted for revenge. He was determined to make her his—more especially when the jeers of his companions sounded in his ears;—and he thought how he would silence and triumph over them, if he carried off this disdainful fair one. Thus would love, pride, and revenge alike be satisfied.

The thought was pleasant to his mind. It was no sooner formed than he arranged a plan for carrying her away. He originally intended to have put this plan into execution on the day when Longbeard and his adherents were summoned before the lord high justiciary and the regents at Westminster, when the city, he thought, would be comparatively deserted, her friends and protectors absent, and no assistance at hand. But circumstances had interfered to prevent the completion of his scheme on that day, and he deferred it unwillingly till the next. His spies were stationed at all the avenues leading to the tanner's house on the bridge. He was watched away on his daily passage to his tan-yard at Bermondsey and it still being early morning, the house was entered by two of his devoted friends, Almeric Talybois and Roger de Tronsebours, and four fellows whom he had hired for the purpose, and both the young women, in spite of their cries for help, taken forcibly out, and put on board a little vessel that was ready for them in the river-side. The outrage was committed with such celerity, and the hour was so early, that of the few in the street not one thought of interfering. It was not Le Boutelier's intentions to have carried away both the girls, but his instruments had objects of their own as well as he had, and finding both together, they did not deem it prudent to leave one behind to inform the world of the name of him who had committed the outrage. Putting all sail on his little bark, the favourable wind and tide bore them rapidly down the river to Greenhithe, where they landed, and horses being ready, they were galloped across

the country without molestation to the stronghold of Le Boutelier, at Willenden, on the Medway, where they arrived the same evening.

We will not attempt to describe the anguish of the fair sisters, who, immediately on their arrival, were separated from each other. They were, however, treated with as much kindness as was possible under the circumstances, and left alone for the night; Le Boutelier not thinking it right to intrude upon his gentle captives till the following morning: when arrayed in his most gallant trim, with eloquence on his tongue, and politeness in his every gesture, he hoped to make a favourable impression upon the hard heart of Friedolinda.

William Le Boutelier was a handsome man, and he knew it. He thought no woman could resist him long. Preparing himself for an outburst of anger at first, and for coldness, and even hatred for a day or two, he was confident, that afterwards he would not only be forgiven, but beloved. No woman (and he had long experience) had ever frowned upon the handsome, the gallant, the rich, the soft-spoken Le Boutelier, but this one; and he would soften her yet, and achieve the greatest of his triumphs. He thought he was a man of tact; for, though passionate and violent at times, he had coolness and method; and he resolved first of all, to present himself before Marian, and gain her forgiveness, and ultimately, perhaps, her good offices. At all events, he resolved to try—and trusted to a handsome face, and eloquent words, to work wonders.

Marian had passed a sleepless night; her once fresh face was pale with watching; her usually bright and beaming eyes were bleared with weeping, and her fair hair hung dishevelled over her shoulders. She made some attempt in the morning to adjust her hair and her attire, when Le Boutelier sent up a request that she would permit him to speak to her. It was a request that could not be denied, and Marian's heart beat high, her limbs trembled, and a burning blush mantled to her cheeks, and made her look more lovely than ever, as Le Boutelier entered and fell on his knees before her.

"Most beautiful Marian," said he, in his softest tones, "I would not injure thee for the wealth of worlds. I will restore thee to thy father, if thou wilt but forgive and pity me, and aid me."

Marian burst into tears; "Oh, my father!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands, "what will become of him; his heart will break for the loss of his children. What have we done that you should use us thus?"

"You have been too beautiful—too like angels!" said Boutelier, "and I, a poor weak mortal, have been maddened

by your charms. For the love of your sister I have done this wrong; to gain her love, I would lay down my life. Will you aid me? will you speak a kind word for me to her? and I will send you back unharmed, and load you not only with blessings, but with gold and jewels;" and, as he spoke, the Norman rose and took hold of her hand, but still respectfully. Marian withdrew hers, and Le Boutelier did not seek to take it again. "Nay, be not angry," said he, "I am already miserable enough."

"Talk not to me of your misery," said Marian; "Oh, my sister! my sister! my poor father!" Her tears again gushed forth, and she sobbed so violently, that even Le Boutelier, hardened as he was, was touched at her grief.

"Weep not," he added, "and you shall be restored to your home and your kindred, and to your true lover, if you have one; but I thought, if I told you how much I loved your sister, and that I sought not to injure either her or you, that you might plead for me. If she will but consent to be mine, you shall be released immediately; and she shall have every luxury and wealth, and power and dominion, that the heart of woman can desire."

"Oh, never! never!" said Marian; "I know that she would die first; her heart can never be yours; but she may forgive, if she cannot love you. Have mercy upon us. We are here in your power;—be generous, and the blessings of an old man will reward you. Send us home, and I will remember you in my prayers;" and the pretty Marian fell at his feet, and looked up into his face with a look so gentle, so sorrowful, and so imploring, that Le Boutelier, at that moment, thought her more lovely than her sister. There was a smile upon his face, as he gazed upon her. Marian saw it, and blushing with shame amid her tears, she arose quickly, and dashed the drops away as if she were angry at herself for weeping. "You do not care for our sorrow. Oh, God be merciful to us," she said, fervently, "for this man will not!"

"You do me wrong," said Le Boutelier, "I came as a penitent, and as a friend. My thoughts are of no evil. You will perhaps acknowledge, ere many hours have passed, that I am not so black as your imagination has painted me. So farewell, too lovely and most unkind of maidens; and, in the meantime, think as generously of me as you can."

With these words Le Boutelier made her a respectful obeisance and withdrew. Taking a stroll in the long corridor leading to the apartment which had been set apart for Friedolinda, he endeavoured to collect his thoughts for an interview with her, for whose love he had, as he thought, endured and adventured so much. Friedolinda had not wept one tear,

though her heart was full of anguish. She had lain all night upon an uneasy couch, endeavouring in vain to repose. It is true she had slept, but such a sleep brought no alleviation; and long before the dawn she had risen from her troubled couch and paced the little chamber, a prey to the most agonizing grief. She thought not only of her own sorrow, but of her father's, of her sister's, and of William Fitzosbert's, whose noble heart would be so deeply wounded by the outrage she had suffered. She was far from help—no one knew whither she had been conveyed—she had no means of communication with those who loved her, and she was completely in the power of a passionate and unscrupulous man. In the bitterness of her grief, as the full sense of her misfortunes burst upon her, she knelt and prayed, and poured out her full soul in supplication at the throne of Mercy, for strength to bear the heavy lot that had been cast upon her, and for courage to die, rather than become the victim of her betrayer. But she was weak from the want of food and rest, and as she knelt, a dizziness seemed to be gathering in her brain, and a film to be extending itself over her eyes. The strangest and most discordant sounds seemed to fill her ears, and she fancied that multitudes of ghastly faces were staring at her. With a violent effort she arose and stood erect. The room appeared full of phantoms, grinning at her, and stretching forth their lanky fingers to drag her by the long hair. She almost persuaded herself that she felt their hot breath upon her cheeks, and their kisses upon her lips; and that when she gazed steadfastly at one, it appeared to assume a horrible likeness of *Le Boutelier*. She shuddered and shut her eyes, pressing her eyelids with all the weight of her burning palms, but still the phantom seemed to look into her soul. She knew that all this was unreal; and, opening the turret window, she looked out and allowed the cool morning breeze to play upon her cheek. She felt relieved, and sitting down by the window awaited the daylight. How beneficent and kind is the face of nature! Deep as her distress was—little as she was in the mood to find subjects for admiration in the landscape, the beauty of the morning was not without a sweet and soothing effect upon her mind. The air was redolent of peace, and the lark had already begun his carol to the coming luminary, the first halos of whose distant glory were spreading over the east. Thus she sat for hours, her cheek resting upon her palm, and her elbow upon the window-sill, meditating on her situation, and devising, one after the other, plans of escape, which were each discarded as impracticable, almost as soon as they were formed. As the larks sang on high, she envied them their wings, and thought it hard that she should be a

captive, when the birds were free. There was a dove cooing under her window to its mate ; and the remembrance, as she listened, suddenly came over her, that by means of those faithful messengers, intelligence had often been conveyed to the absent. The next instant the absurdity of the hope she had formed struck her so forcibly, that sorrowful as she was, she could not forbear an almost imperceptible smile. Turning round at the same instant, the blood rushed to her cheeks, and she uttered an involuntary shriek of alarm, to find Le Boutelier standing beside her. How he had entered, she knew not, as she had fastened and barricaded her door to prevent a surprise. She saw that she was completely at his mercy, and she shuddered, as the truth became evident, that he had entered by some secret door, which she could not defend against him. There was a gleam of pleasure and triumph in his eye, which so terrified her, that she did not dare to look at him.

"And is my fair cruelty," said he, in his blandest tones, and falling on one knee gallantly before her, "still as cold and as unforgiving as ever?"

Friedolinda turned away her face, and made no reply.

"Why so unkind and coy?" continued he, seizing her hand and covering it with kisses in spite of her resistance. "Why so relentless for a fault which thine own loveliness has made me guilty of,—why art thou so beautiful, and so cold?"

"Oh, I pray you have mercy upon me," said Friedolinda, struggling to withdraw her hand, and retreating to the further corner of the room behind a large table, that served as a sort of protection to her; "if it would save me from you, I would destroy this unhappy beauty, and sear my face with a hot iron."

"Oh, that would be a foul shame—a sin—a crime—a desecration of God's own temple of beauty, which he has built in thee," said Le Boutelier; "but what have I done that I should be so odious in thy sight? I take Heaven to witness that I love thee as my own soul,—that I doat upon and adore thee; that to my eyes thou art the best and most beautiful of womankind. Tell me, what shall I do to make thee love me?"

"Oh, much to make me be grateful to you, even now," replied Friedolinda. "Restore my innocent sister—a poor playful affectionate child—to her father: restore me and her to our own homes and firesides, and I will pray to God to forgive you, and will publish to all the world that William Le Boutelier has a noble heart."

"The sacrifice is too great," said Le Boutelier; "it is be-

yond the stretch of mortal virtue to have such beauty as thine to gaze upon, and to let it go. But make thy mind easy, thy sister shall suffer no harm—I love her not; I love thee.”

“Then God be praised!” said Friedolinda, clasping her hands in fervent gratitude; “my sorrow is less than I thought it was, and I can bear it, since it will fall only on me.”

“The day thou consentest to be mine, she shall be free,” continued Le Boutelier, approaching close to Friedolinda, who still endeavoured to retreat as he advanced; “but not till then.”

“Oh, cruel, cruel,” said Friedolinda, wringing her hands; “have you no pity?”

“I have no room for pity,” replied Le Boutelier; “my heart is so full of love, it can encourage no other feeling. Teach me what to do to gain a smile from those enchanting lips, and a glance of kindness from those sweet blue eyes.”

“Hear me!” said Friedolinda, who was alarmed at the accent, and more so at the manner of the Norman; “and if ever a spark of manly feeling warmed your breast—if you are the son of a woman, have pity upon us,—have pity upon me. We are weak, and you are strong. Generosity ought to dwell with strength. Let my sister come to me; do not separate the sweet child from me, who have been as a friend and a mother to her. Leave us alone to our sorrow for a week, that we may weep together, ere I die.”

“Do not talk of dying,” said Le Boutelier, gazing with admiration upon her eloquent face, which glowed with a fine enthusiasm of grief as she spoke; “it is I who am dying,—dying of love,—love unrequited; and you will not even smile to relieve me. Your sister shall come to you as you wish; I am not obdurate and hard of heart, though you are. Let me take one kiss from those lips, and I will not urge my suit again till the morrow.”

“I would rather die,” said Friedolinda, “than suffer the pollution.”

“Nay, nay, my disdainful beauty; ’tis your anger that speaks. It is not yourself,—and I forgive your anger. It becomes you so well. All beautiful women are kind at last, however angry they may be for a time. You also will be kinder in a day or two; and, to show you how I respect you, I will deny myself the happiness of looking upon you for one whole day,—a week would be too long; and you shall be alone with your sister.”

“But not here,” said Friedolinda; “there is a secret door to this chamber; place us together where we may sleep in peace. Be not generous by halves. Is it manly,—is it worthy of a knight who has won his spurs?”

"Perhaps not," said Le Boutelier, who seldom blushed, but whose face reddened a little at this reproach; "and I pledge my word, which was never yet broken, that I will take no advantage of you in that respect. But there is not a room in this castle which has not a secret door; but I will show thee how to render it useless. Look here."

The Norman, as he spoke, pressed his foot against a panel in the wall, and a door opened. Friedolinda looked on with great interest, but without speaking. Le Boutelier held it open for a moment, and then shut it again, and, touching another part of the wall, there was a noise as if several bolts had been suddenly shot, and when he again touched the panel which had formerly caused the door to fly open, it remained shut.

"There is the secret of it," he added, "and a battering ram would scarcely burst it open when it is thus secured. Make what use of it you please; but know this, however much it may increase your own feelings of security, it will not decrease mine. You may keep me from your chamber, but you cannot escape from this castle."

Friedolinda sighed, and yet she felt happy that she was to have a respite, however short, from the importunities of his passion; and, above all, that she might enjoy, even for an hour, the society of her sister,—the child of her heart, and the companion of her misfortunes.

Le Boutelier withdrew, for he thought he had made a favourable impression, and in a few minutes afterwards the sisters were locked in each other's arms, and the tears of Friedolinda flowed for the first time. She took her sister upon her knee, as if she had been a child, and loaded her with caresses and endearments. Their tears flowed fast together, as their encircling arms were pressed around each other.

Let us draw a veil over their love and their sorrow. Friedolinda confessed in her secret soul, that bitter as was her cup, there was one drop of sweetness in it. Fervent were the prayers they both offered up to the throne of God, and renewed energy and hope descended into their souls.

CHAPTER XVI.

"The humble boon was soon obtained,
The aged minstrel entrance gained.
And when he reached the hall of state—"

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

ON the evening of the same day, the gleeman and the herald arrived within sight of Le Boutelier's castle of Willenden. It stood on the eastern bank of the Medway, and was surrounded on the other three sides by the walls, fosses, entrenchments, and bastions, which were the usual safeguards of the houses of the great in those troublesome times; when might was right, and the pleasure of the powerful was law. On the river side it was equally well defended, both by art and by nature.

The gleeman deemed it most advisable that he should enter this baronial fortress alone; for his character generally procured him not only a free admittance but a hearty welcome wherever he came, and no suspicions would be raised. He could also much better communicate the result of his inquiries, as the herald outside would be a ready messenger to carry the news to Bryan Fitzosbert, if, as was more than suspected, the fair sisters were detained by Le Boutelier. John-o'-the-Dingle was an old hand at surprises and adventures of all kinds. He determined to remain a guest at the castle, if he once got in, until Bryan came to the rescue. He might thus be of much more service in aiding him, for a friend inside would be of much more value than half-a-dozen outside. The difficulty was to agree upon the signal by which the gleeman was to communicate his intelligence to the herald. Various plans were proposed, but they were all so uncertain and impracticable that they were each abandoned. It was, however, at last arranged that they should meet under a certain tree, which they marked for the purpose, about a mile from the gate, if it was found that they were on the wrong scent; but that the failure of John-o'-the-Dingle to come to the place of rendezvous, before the morning's dawn, would be sufficient indication that all was right, and that immediately afterwards the herald might return to the hunters of Blean, and announce the presence of Friedolinda and Marian Jordan in the castle of Le Boutelier.

With this understanding they parted; and John-o'-the-Dingle unslinging from his back the cyther, which he carried invariably, the badge of his profession, and the means whereby he lived on his various expeditions, proceeded boldly to the

gate, and blew a loud blast, which startled the dozing warder on his post. He was admitted immediately.

The weary and monotonous life led by the nobles and their retainers, when there was neither war nor hunting to vary it, made the wandering gleeman, or minstrel, a welcome guest wherever he showed himself; for him the warmest corner at the fireside was reserved in the winter; to him the place of honour was given up in the summer. As the newspaper is now to the politician and the quidnunc, and the most fashionable romance to readers generally, so was the gleeman to our forefathers and foremothers in the days of yore. In his person were combined all the attractions of the gazette, the novel, and the theatre; it was he who brought tidings from afar; it was he who made the song go round, and wiled away the long hours of evening; and it was he who made eyes weep, or hearts beat high, at tales of fictitious love, or grief, or heroism.

It was the supper hour in the castle of Willenden, and William Le Boutelier sat in his hall, with his household and retainers around him, when the arrival of the old gleeman was announced. A rude oak table extended nearly the whole length of the hall, being elevated about a foot above its level, when it reached the upper end—the place of the salt and of the master of the house, and all his guests of his own degree. In a high arm-chair at this end, under a canopy of arms, banners, and heraldic devices, sat the unwarlike form of the Lord of Willenden, who smiled graciously upon John-o'-the-Dingle, as, cyther in hand, he made his obeisance, and took his seat below the salt. Store of meat and wine were soon placed before him, and without neglecting that part of his business, John had leisure to look around and see into what sort of company he had entered. First, there was the lord of the castle himself, whom he had never seen before, looking so smirk and elegant, that he thought, if he had him alone in the wild wood, he could take him up in his hand and squeeze his life out like a butterfly's. Then there was Sir Robert de Gony, a knight with a bald head and a very long neck and nose, a cousin of William Le Boutelier, who acted the part of a modern toady—laughed when his patron laughed—looked grave when he did, and only differed with him in opinion in so slight and convenient a degree, as to keep up an argument without giving offence. Then there were the Sirs Roger de Tronsebours and Almeric Talybois, who had fought together in the Holy Land, were not a little vain of the achievement, and took care to let every one be informed of that fact into whose society they fell, whether that society were of high or of low degree. Besides these four, there sat five or six others

of inferior rank, esquires and gentlemen, at the raised end of the table, while at the other there were about a score of domestics and men-at-arms, who always dined and supped with their lord. The walls of this apartment were of carved oak, hung round with deer's horns, fox-tails, shields, pikes, lances, quivers, and the various paraphernalia used in war against man or beast.

"Hast thou journeyed far to-day?" said William Le Boutelier, after watching for some moments the valorous tooth-achievements of the gleeman.

"Some twenty leagues, since yesternorn," said the gleeman, carelessly, and quaffing the contents of a large drinking-horn, "some twenty leagues, or so."

"On foot?"

"Ay, upon these feet!" said the old man, looking down complacently upon his sturdy legs; "they are not much the worse for wear, notwithstanding that they bear the burden of threescore years and ten."

"You must be weary after so long a tramp!" said Le Boutelier, "'twould be almost shame to ask for a song to-night."

"Not at all," said the gleeman; "I'm no chicken—a light heart shortens a heavy road, and beef and ale are wonder-working restoratives. I could not accept your kind hospitality, or sleep upon the bed which you will give me, if I were not allowed to repay you in the minstrel fashion."

"Well, thou art a hearty old man," said Almeric Talybois, "and thou shalt make merry for us by and by. But tell us, is there any news on the road? Which way didst thou come?"

"I came from London," said the gleeman, answering the last question first, "but the news is not much worth."

"Never mind—let us have it," said Robert de Gonyes.

"'Tis but an old story newly repeated," said the gleeman, "and I have heard it so often for the last twelvemonth, that I have no faith in it; 'tis said, however, that the fat burghers of London have opened their money bags at last, and that the whole ransom of our noble king Richard is ready."

"Too good to be true, by my faith!" said William Le Boutelier.

"This I know, however," said the gleeman, "the queen-mother is preparing to leave England, and people say, that she is to bear the money to Austria."

"Ah!" exclaimed Almeric Talybois, "then may the noble Richard, with whom I fought against the infidels at Acre, come back to his loving people. Are you sure the queen Eleanor is going?"

"Oh, not I!" said the gleeman, "I am sure of nothing, just now, but that this ale is some of the best I ever tasted;" and he took another draught to corroborate the assertion.

"Pshaw!" replied Talybois, "and hast thou heard nothing else? Are there to be no tournaments or festivals in London? Is there nothing stirring?"

"In London? oh, yes!" replied the gleeman, "I had forgotten; William with the Longbeard has frightened the Earl of Moreton and the Archbishop of Canterbury; and though the churchman wishes him at the devil, he dares not lift a finger to hurt even a hair of his head."

"Ah well!" said Le Boutelier, "we have heard all this before, and we see thou hast no news to tell us; so try the ale again, for thou seemest to like it, and give us a song."

"Of love, or war?" asked the minstrel, when he had drunk the ale as requested, and preluded a little on the strings of his instrument, to see whether it were in tune.

"Mingle them!" said Le Boutelier.

"Canst thou sing the old ballad of how the Paynim's daughter fell in love with the Christian knight at Antioch?" inquired Roger de Tronsebours; "that ballad touches me more than any ballad that ever was said or sung: I feel it all over me."

"Come, come, none of thy vain boasting," said Almeric Talybois; "we all know that the wench who fell in love with thee at Antioch was an ugly little Jewess—the daughter of a dirty old money-lender—as dirty and as foul as her father. It's of no use; thou canst never transform her into a Paynim beauty. I was there, and know all about it."

"I tell thee, Almeric Talybois," said Tronsebours, fiercely, and pretending to draw his sword, "it is a foul calumny, and the man that dares to repeat it, shall prove it with his life! By St. Peter, he shall."

"Nay, put up thy sword, man," said his companion, "and listen to the ballad; the minstrel, no doubt, will be able to sing thee something that will restore thy good humour. Though I know she *was* an ugly Jewess, I'll own she was a beautiful Saracen, if it were but to satisfy thee."

"I should be a fool myself, were I to be annoyed at a fool's speech," said Tronsebours, driving his sword forcibly into its sheath again; "so sing away, sir minstrel."

"Ay, ay, sing away," said Le Boutelier, laughing at the jeers of the one and the anger of the other; "sing away."

The gleeman thus called upon, began his ballad as follows, which he sang with a clear stentorian voice:—

The Paynim's Daughter.

- "The Paynim had a lovely daughter,
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 And she bathed herself in the running water,
 Ere dried the morning dew.
 A Christian knight upon the brink,
 He stopped his weary steed to drink.
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
- "Her naked charms alone array'd in,
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 Sore surprised was the Paynim maiden
 To meet a stranger's view,
 And her voice re-echoed through the shade,
 As she wept and shrieked and called for aid.
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
- "She rose from the water bright and golden,
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 And her loose robes round her waist enfolden,
 She fled to the woods from view;
 And in his heart, the Christian knight
 Said he never had seen so fair a sight,
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
- "Oh! wert thou but a Christian creature,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 'Thou wert the paragon of nature,
 And homage I would do;
 My bride, sweet maiden, thou shouldst be,
 And I'd carry thee across the sea,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
- "'Twas thus the knight was lost in thinking,
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 His sword undrawn, his horse still drinking,
 When he heard a fierce halloo—
 'Twas the Paynim's self—Oh sight of fear,
 With a score of horsemen in his rear,
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
- "I give this Christian dog to slaughter,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 'Who dared to look upon my daughter,'
 As she bathed in the river blue.
 He shall hang on a gibbet seven yards high,
 And rot in the sun till his bones are dry,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
- "They bound his hands and feet together,
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 With bands of iron and of leather,
 And in a dungeon threw,
 Shut from the pleasant light of day,
 To moan his very soul away,
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!

"But tender was the Paynim's daughter,
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 She had no heart for deeds of slaughter,
 And the youth so handsome too,—
 She heard his moans from his dungeon grate,
 And wept to think upon his fate,
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!

"'Foul shame it is,' said the lady, sighing,
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 'That I should live while he is dying
 In a dungeon hid from view;
 So young, so handsome, and so brave,
 But he shall not die if I can save,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!

"She stole to his cell at hour of even,
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 'Oh! Christian knight—be all forgiven,
 And lift thine eyes of blue.
 Thou seest a maiden here who'll give
 Her very life that thou mayst live,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!

"'Renounce for me thy rites baptismal,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 'And from this dungeon, cold and dismal,
 I'll lead thee ever true.
 And I will give thee heart and hand,
 And make thee richest of the land,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!

"'I thank thee, O thou tender lady,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 'But never shall my heart unsteady
 Forswear religion true.
 The doom that waits me I must dree,
 Yet happy since I die for thee,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!

"'Alas! oh Christian knight hard-hearted!
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 'Sad were my fate wert thou departed,
 And ever should I rue.
 Think on my words, and ponder well,
 For I love thee more than tongue can tell,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!

"'Sweet Paynim lady, much they grieve me,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!
 'And yet I love thee, oh believe me,
 With a heart for ever true.
 But rather than forswear its faith,
 This heart would court the pangs of death,'
 With a fallal—lallal—loo!

- “ ‘Thou shalt not die!’ said the lady, weeping,
With a fallal—lallal—loo!
‘To-night, when all the guards are sleeping,
Thy chains I will undo;
I’ll make the holy Christian sign,
And so abjure my creed for thine,’
With a fallal—lallal—loo!
- “ ‘And my sire will slay his foolish daughter,’
With a fallal—lallal—loo!
‘Oh no!’ said the knight, ‘o’er the briny water
We’ll dare him to pursue.
I’ve a thousand men in the Christian host,
And a good ship riding on the coast,’
With a fallal—lallal—loo!
- “ ‘They’re gone—they’re gone o’er the foaming water,
With a fallal—lallal—loo!
And the Paynim cursed his lovely daughter,
And her Christian knight so true.
But of his wrath nought heeded they,
They were out of his reach ere break of day;—
With a fallal—lallal—loo!
- “ ‘The waves were calm, the wind was steady,
With a fallal—lallal—loo!
And the Christian knight and his tender lady,
Were ever kind and true,
And never once had cause to weep,
That they fled together o’er the deep,
With a fallal—lallal—loo!’

The applause of the company rewarded the minstrel at the conclusion of his ballad. None was louder in his manifestations of delight than Roger de Tronsebours. “By St. Peter,” said he, as soon as silence was restored; “that ballad was made originally upon me. It tells the very same adventures as mine, with some trifling exceptions.”

Sir William Le Boutelier nudged his cousin, Robert de Gonys, and De Gonys nudged Le Boutelier, while others of the company winked at each other, expecting the man of lies would make some amusement for them.

“What? do you doubt it?” said Tronsebours, somewhat sharply, looking at his companion, Almeric de Talybois, who had winked rather too obviously.

“By the Virgin, it is far beyond a doubt,” said Almeric de Talybois; “—on the wrong side.”

“What do you mean by the wrong side?” inquired Tronsebours. “But I don’t care what you say, my word is better than yours any day,—and I know that ballad was made upon me. A sweet creature the lady was.”

“Did you see her bathing?” inquired the minstrel, not a little amused.

"Ay did I. Talk of Venus indeed,—Venus was not to be compared to her."

"And were you bound with chains, and thrown into a dungeon?"

"Was I not? I have the marks of the irons upon me now, which I could show you if need were."

"And did the damsel visit you in the dungeon, as the ballad says?"

"By St. Peter she did. It was dark as pitch,—but her eyes made light as she entered."

Almeric Talybois coughed several times, and put his hand to his nose. Tronsebours frowned at him, but took no further notice.

"And did she propose you should renounce the Christian faith for her?"

"She did; but it was of no use,—honour above all things, I thought to myself. Besides, though I loved her desperately, I saw no reason why I should go to hell for her,—so I converted her."

"And did you escape with her?"

"Ah! that's the unfortunate part of it," said Tronsebours, pretending to heave and labour with a deep sigh; "we had got safely out beyond the garden palings, when her father, and upwards of a dozen men, suddenly came round upon us another way; the fair Zuleika fainted, and was snatched up by two fellows, who made off with her in a minute. I was left alone with at least ten of them. Placing myself in a corner, I kept them at bay; four of them I slew in a few minutes, and two more soon followed them; the rest fairly took to their heels, and the father alone was left. A desperate struggle we had, which lasted for full an hour, neither of us being able to gain the advantage. Just as I was about to give in, say my prayers, and commit my soul to heaven, the old Paynim held out his hand to me. 'You're a brave fellow,' said he, 'and curse me if I'll hurt you; I have got my daughter again, which was all that I wanted, and now you may go. Make haste, or some of my men may be after you yet;' and so saying, he gave me a cordial shake of the hand and went away. Well pleased to see this happy end of so desperate a struggle, I went away too, or I would not now be alive to tell the tale."

"Oh! oh!" said Almeric de Talybois, bursting into a fit of immoderate laughter, in which most of the company joined, not excepting old John-o'-the-Dingle, whose laugh was as sonorous as his song.

"What the devil are you laughing at?" said Tronsebours, looking fiercely at his friend Almeric, and then at the rest of

the company successively, until his eyes lighted upon the minstrel; "and you too," he added, "have a care—what are *you* laughing about?"

"To think how the poor wretches took to their heels," said the minstrel, with a wink, which again set the table in a roar.

"By St. Peter! they fled like hares," said De Tronsebours.

"But did you not inquire afterwards about the pretty Zuleika?" inquired Le Boutelier.

"Not I," said Tronsebours; "I saved her soul for her; she became a Christian for my sake, and if she died, as no doubt she did, she went to heaven; and so my conscience is satisfied about her."

"'Tis the first time I ever knew thou hadst one," said Almeric; "I think the ballad *must* have been made upon thee."

"The first part of it was, undoubtedly," said Tronsebours; "and to my thinking, it is spoiled by not being more correct at the end. That desperate fight of mine, against such odds, is a fine subject for a song; and so, sir minstrel, when you sing it again, I advise you to alter it."

"Oh, I will—I will," said John-o'-the-Dingle, laughing, and disclosing two rows of formidable and regular white teeth, which would have given beauty to a young man of twenty; "my version is clearly the wrong one."

"Thou'rt an honest and a sensible fellow," said Tronsebours, "and I drink waes-hael to thee."

"Waes-hael," said the minstrel, emptying a moderate sized flagon at one draught, "and peace to the soul of the fair Zuleika."

"Ha! ha!" said Almeric Talybois, seeing the joke, "thou art an honest and a sensible fellow, and thou must give us another song—silence there—silence, ye varlets—silence for the minstrel!"

John-o'-the-Dingle, nothing loth, again swept his hands rapidly over the strings of his instrument, and after a few preliminary notes, intermingled with hums and ha's to clear his throat, he began as follows:—

"Two beautiful sisters in London there were,
The elder was dark, and the younger was fair;
The one was serene as a midsummer moon,
The other as fresh as a morning in June.
Tera-lin—Tera-lee!

"Alas! that the tears of the aged should flow!
In the house of their sire there is wailing and woe;

Broken-hearted he pines with his hands on his breast,
For the spoiler has stolen his doves from his nest.

Tera-lin—Tera-lee!

"His grief for the elder is bitter and strong,
But he mourns for his youngest one all the night long;
And the flood of his sorrow no friend may assuage,
For the child of his heart and the hope of his age.

Tera-lin—Tera-lee!

"The lovers lament, but no tears may they shed,
But they vow deep revenge on the ravisher's head;
One wears a green vest, and has buskins of brown,
And the other is ruler in London's fair town.

Tera-lin—Tera-lee!

"Let the spoiler beware—while the maidens repine—
A torch in the distance shall suddenly shine;
Brown-buskin has tracked him—the chase has begun,
And the arrow shall speed, and the work shall be done.

Tera-lin—Tera-lee!"

As the minstrel concluded his ballad, the applause rose vehemently from the lower end of the table, but no sound of approval came from William Le Boutelier, Robert de Gonys, Roger de Tronsebours, or Almeric Talybois. They sat in silence, and looked at one another, while Le Boutelier half rose from his chair, and his face was flushed, and his hands trembled. The gleeman took a cup of ale, and as he drank, diligently observed all their movements. He saw enough to increase his suspicions, but gave no sign of what he felt. "You don't approve the ballad," he said, carelessly, "and yet it has been a great favourite always, wherever it has been sung; I'll sing you another, if you like it."

"Tell me," said Le Boutelier, looking at him as if he would read his soul in his face, "did you ever sing that song before?"

"Ay," said De Gonys, echoing not only the words, but the tone in which they were uttered, "did you ever sing that song before?"

"Many's the time and oft; or one very like it," replied the gleeman, unmoved; "did it offend you?"

"Do you think I am a girl, to be either pleased or offended at an idle ballad?" said Le Boutelier, whose wrath against the minstrel was rapidly rising, and whose suspicions of treachery gained strength every minute, as he thought upon the palpable allusions of the song—too palpable, he thought, for accident; "do you think your ballads touch us?"

"Not I," said John-o'-the-Dingle, "but you make such a pothor about it, as if there were something personal in it."

"I tell you this for your comfort, sir minstrel," said Le

Boutelier, bending over the table, and whispering loud enough to be heard by all those who sat with him at the upper end, "I think you are here for no good purpose, and I shall not part with you till I know something more about you. There is a gallows in my court-yard."

"Is there?" said the gleeman, looking up quietly in his face. "Well, well, your speech is quite incomprehensible—I know not what you mean—but your ale and your wine are very good and very strong. I am afraid I have taken somewhat too much of them myself, and John-o'-the-Dingle was never the man to be angry for a word said after supper."

"He knows nothing," whispered De Gonys to his lord.

"We shall see," replied Le Boutelier, impatiently; "send the men away, and let us be alone."

At a given signal the retainers and domestics retired, and Le Boutelier and his three friends were left alone with the gleeman. John-o'-the-Dingle chuckled—suspicion in his breast was giving place to certainty; but to show no symptoms of intelligence, he yawned most naturally, as soon as they were alone, and folded his arms upon his breast as if he were very sleepy.

"Arouse thee, man," said Roger de Tronsebours, shaking him, "and tell me this; wouldst thou like to be stuck on a gibbet for the crows to pluck thine eyes out?"

"None of your gibes and jokes," replied John, yawning again, and disclosing his pearly teeth; "I have walked far to-day, and would like to go to sleep, if you would give me but a little straw to lie on. I must be up ere the cock crows, and away again."

"Oh, no," said William Le Boutelier, "we cannot part with you so soon."

"As you will," said John, yawning again; "I am not particular; and as I said before, your ale is excellent—perhaps a little too strong—but that's a fault I'll excuse.—I'll stay a month, if you like."

"There is no harm in this fellow," said Almeric Talybois; "let him go to bed."

"He shall have a strong room to sleep in," said Le Boutelier, "for I am not satisfied; and by my knighthood, if he be a spy and traitor, I'll take dire vengeance upon him!"

No further conversation passed that night. Le Boutelier and his friends withdrew, and the gleeman was ushered to a room and a couch, and two men were stationed at the outside of the door to watch the whole night, lest he should attempt to escape. Nothing was further from John-o'-the-Dingle's thoughts. "Thou wilt not see me to-night or to-morrow, sir Herald de Robaulx," said he to himself, as he lay down on

his couch of straw, and sought repose, "and I hope thou wilt be a wise and speedy messenger, and carry thy news to the wild woods without delay, that the pretty birds are in this cage. By St. Peter, I'm a good hound on the chase; I got on the right scent immediately. Ah, well, I'm very sleepy. Ho! heigh-um! and the morrow shall care for itself. No doubt I shall get a sight of the pretty ones; and if I do, may I live upon water and grass all the days of my life, if I do not contrive to comfort them; heigh-ho!" and with this last ejaculation old John closed his eyes, and in one minute was fast asleep.

CHAPTER XVII.

"They were outlawed for venison,
These yeomen every one;
They swore them brethren on a day."

PERCY'S Relics.

ROBERT DE ROBAULX was most punctual in keeping his appointment at the tree, and, having waited three hours beyond the time, for fear of accidents, he thought that he might safely accept the non-appearance of the minstrel as a signal that they were on the right scent. Upon second thoughts, however, he resolved not to take his final departure until the morning; and, wrapping himself up in his cloak, he lay comfortably down on the couch of greensward that nature had provided, and slept as well as if he had been on a bed of down, although, by the bye, it may be said, that in his days such an article was a luxury, which even kings could not command, and when beds of straw and rushes were used by the same classes as now employ feathers. The herald, as we have said, slept well,—for he was inured to the weather and the seasons, and thought a night out of doors no hardship,—and was only awakened by the rays of the morning sun streaming into his face, and the matin-chant of the cock that crowed in the castle of Willenden. He started to his feet at the sound, and was ready for the work of the day, whatever it might be. "By my troth, my valiant old glee-man," he said to himself, "I fear we have made but a bad arrangement together,—a positive signal would have been much better than this negative one, and I think I'll just go boldly to the gate of this castle, and make some inquiries about thee. There's no fear of me, and perhaps I'll get some breakfast into the bargain." The thought was scarcely formed before the herald began to put it in execution; and, march-

ing boldly towards the gate of the baronial edifice, he blew a blast upon the horn that hung suspended on the outside.

The warden looked from his window, and seeing but one man, held this short parley: "Who art thou that comest so early?" said he, "knight or villain?"

"Neither!" replied De Robaulx, "but a poor minstrel,—aweary and somewhat hungry,—and who can fancy at the present moment no greater good on earth than a good breakfast!"

"Come thy ways in then," said the warden, descending from his turret, and opening the door. "Come thy ways in, and take a bite and a sup." And he ushered him into his own apartment, where bread and cheese and ale at the lord's expense were always ready for the hungry traveller—"Any news stirring?"

"Nothing. Less than nothing," said de Robaulx; "I wish I could give you some in return for your good fare—news must be welcome here—for I suppose you don't often hear any?"

"O yes we do," said the warden, "we had another minstrel here last night."

"An old fellow?" said De Robaulx, with his mouth full, "a hearty old fellow?—with stout legs, grey hair, and teeth like a wolf?—I know—I met him yesterday."

"You describe the very man," said the warden.

"Is he here still?" inquired the herald, without betraying that he was particularly anxious for a reply.

The warden nodded.

"Then I can't stay," said the herald, "that old fellow allows us younger men no chance—he sings a better song, and tells a better jest, than any of us, and takes all the applause away from us. Tell me this, master warden—don't you think, when a man reaches the complete old age of seventy, that he should die, and leave the world to the new generation?—what business have people to live beyond their span, and take up the room of those who were born after them?"

"Egad, I don't know," said the warden, somewhat puzzled at the question; "I must think about it."

"You'll be of my opinion, if you do. Is it not enough to aggravate a man, when he finds all his applause taken from him by another who ought to be in his grave? But I must go,—tell me first, however, does this John-o'-the-Dingle intend, do you think, to make a long stay with you? He is seldom in a hurry to go, when he is comfortable."

"I'll be bound he'll stay a week," said the warden; "he seemed mightily at his ease, I assure you."

"Ah, well then, two suns cannot shine in one sky, so I shall wish you good day, master warden, and I may perhaps see

you again soon; John-o'-the-Dingle doesn't make his longest visits to houses where there are no fair ladies to listen to his ballads. There are none here, you know—eh?" and the herald, as he spoke, put another large piece of bread into his mouth.

"Ay, ay," said the warden, silyly, putting his finger to his nose, and looking round to make quite sure that they were alone; "hush! hush!" he added; "appearances deceive,—d'ye understand? Every man's not just a bachelor that gives himself out as such d'ye know?—there are pretty wenches in Kent, and why not in Willenden? But hark! not a word—the day may come, and that before most people would think it, when there may be a fair lady in our lord's hall,—d'ye see, eh?"

"Ay, ay; very natural,—some blue-eyed beauty—eh?"

"Beautiful blue eyes indeed," said the warden; "and dark hair,—sweet creatures."

"More than one, eh? but it's no business of mine. I would, however, that I could stay with you, but I have vowed never to sleep under the same roof as old John-o'-the-Dingle; we were friends once, but we're sworn foes now. So fare you well, master warden, and God keep you. When I come this way again, we'll make better acquaintance together."

"With all my heart!" replied the warden, shaking hands with him with great cordiality, and watching him from the gate till he was out of sight. "A jolly minstrel, by my faith, and sings an excellent song, I warrant me. I shall not be sorry if he does come soon back again; it's a weary life, opening and shutting this gate from morning to night; and were it not for a song now and then, and a drinking bout, I should grow stagnant. Heigh—ho—me," and so with a long yawn, the worthy warden slowly closed the gate, and withdrew to his own apartment, to indulge his limbs in the comfortable arm-chair in which he sat for eight hours out of the twenty-four.

De Robaulx did not once look behind him. He had gained all the intelligence he sought,—quite sufficient for his purposes; and old John-o'-the-Dingle had gained no more, and scarcely as much, with considerably more risk to himself. Small delay made he on his return to the greenwoods, and ere evening twilight, he was in the presence of Bryan Fitzosbert, and had detailed his adventure of the previous night and morning, to an auditory who listened with intense interest to every word he uttered.

"The false villain!" said Bryan Fitzosbert; "if he have harmed so much as a hair of the head of either of the pretty ones. I will pull down his house about his ears. and hang him

up on one of his own trees. My sweet Marian!" he added, in a low voice to himself, quite unconscious that he had a rival present, "my sweet Marian, I will take a fierce and a swift vengeance for thy wrongs."

"I'll join you, heart and soul!" said the herald.

"Thou'rt a good fellow," returned Bryan, "and if thou wilt faithfully and truly abide the decision of the fair Marian, when we rescue her, and renounce all pretensions to her if she decides against thee, as I promise I will do, if she decides against me, I will love thee as my brother, and cherish thee as my friend."

"I am afraid that Marian will never be mine," said the herald, with a sorrowful look, which however he banished immediately for one more cheerful; "weak is the suit, after all, that has not even confidence to back it, and nothing but a father's commands to rely upon. However, I will forego my claim in favour of yours, if by your means she is relieved from the grasp of this jackanapes. Marian never smiled upon me."

"Ay, but she has laughed at you," said Bryan.

"True; but the love that is laughed at is not the love to prosper; there is one who smiles on me—and with such smiles—I cannot think of them, for if I do, I should not even be able to summon up a show of sorrow to renounce fair Marian."

"And is it so?" said Bryan, "and is it so, truly? then we are sworn friends for ever; thou shalt aid my suit, which, however, scarcely requires it, and I will aid thine."

"So thou shalt; but I flatter myself I shall succeed without any aid, except from my own tongue and my good looks, such as they are. Talk to me no more of beauty; beauty is not worth looking at, unless it be kind."

"My opinion, exactly," said Bryan; "but while we talk thus, my poor brother is wandering disconsolate in London, and cursing the unknown hawk that has pounced upon his dove, and has no one to comfort him."

"And the worthy tanner—poor old man," rejoined the herald; "I promised to gain some intelligence for him—his woes are greatest of all—his home has been rendered desolate at one stroke, and he has none to console him. I must just, if it please you, Sir Bryan Brownbuskin, refresh and recruit myself by a good supper and a sound sleep, and by the dawn be off again on my way to London. Do you think for me what message I shall bear; I know the excellent old tanner well enough, to be sure that he will return with me."

"And I know William Longbeard well enough, to know that he will make a third in the party, and bring five hundred

men with him too, if it be requisite. By St. Paul, we shall have a jolly fight for it, if that false traitor, William Le Boutelicer, does not restore the girls unharmed, as he stole them!" and Bryan rubbed his hands together in anticipation of the fray, and his cheeks flushed and his eyes sparkled.

"Get thee to thy supper and thy bed," he added, after a short pause, to the herald, "and I will think, ere morning, what message thou shalt carry to London. But no, I have forgotten—thou art not yet a freeman of our company, and canst not be trusted longer with us, or employed in our service, until thou art duly enrolled amongst the members of our ancient, and worshipful, and most noble fraternity. Wilt thou become one of us?"

"Will I not," replied the herald, "I desire nothing better. Is the ceremony a long one?"

"Rather," answered Fitzosbert; "hast thou a strong heart, unwearying patience, and a discreet tongue?"

"If I tell thee the truth, I shall blush; but I must tell it; therefore, I say, and I blush as I say it, I do possess those virtues in a degree."

"Canst thou bear pain and never flinch?"

"Try me."

"The ordeal is a hard one."

"Never mind. Hast thou gone through it?" said the herald.

"Yes; and every one of my men."

"Then why should not I? Am I not as good as any of them?"

"Ay,—I like thy courage; it augurs well; and thou shalt this night be enrolled in our company, and initiated in all our mysteries, and take the oaths, which no man ever yet broke, and lived twenty-four hours afterwards." As the hunter finished speaking, he drew a little silver whistle from his bosom, and applying it to his lips, blew a shrill blast, which re-echoed among the glades of the forest, and was repeated on every side of them by twenty or thirty similar instruments. In an instant afterwards, De Robaulx found himself suddenly surrounded by a score of men; his arms were seized and pinioned before he could say a word, and a bandage passed over his eyes and firmly secured. Somewhat startled at this rough treatment, he was about to exclaim against it, when as suddenly a gag was clapped into his mouth, and he was rendered completely powerless, unable to struggle, to call out, or to see. He had, it is true, the use of his legs, but they were of little service, except to bear him whither his conductors pleased. He was led rapidly forward, the crowd of huntsmen shouting with loud merriment in the rear, till the woods rang

again with the echo of their voices. The face of the herald was flushed and hot, and the cool night breeze that played upon it as he passed, was refreshing to his whole frame. He had boasted somewhat of his patience, and it had now to be put to the test; coarse jests, obstreperous laughter, and the loud huzzas of the hunters came at intervals upon his ears, and he was altogether puzzled to imagine the intentions of his assailants. To him it seemed as if they were walking for miles amid the forest, turning sometimes to the right hand and sometimes to the left—now in open glades, and now amid thick brushwood that tore his garments and pierced into his flesh, and now over swamps and boggy ground, where he sank up to his ankles. At last he heard the voice of Bryan Fitzosbert for the first time that he had been able to distinguish it, giving the command to halt. The noisy crew were silent immediately, and a halt was made, evidently still in the open air, for the herald could feel the light breeze blowing freshly into his face, and heard the leaves of the tall trees rustling as it passed. An instant afterwards the gag was removed from his mouth and the bandage from his eyes, and the herald looking about him with as much alarm and bewilderment as curiosity, found himself in the midst of a group of Brownbuskin's men, all looking upon him with the utmost gravity, while a deep silence prevailed. The herald was about to speak, when Bryan waved his hand, and the gag was immediately placed in his mouth again.

“Hallo, Tom-o'-the-Yew, come forth!” said the hunter; and one of the men stepped forward with a cross-bow in his hand; “be thou hoodwinked,” he added, “and stand thou there.”

The man was blindfolded accordingly, and placed exactly opposite the spot where the herald stood. At the same instant, another man who was behind the herald, repassed the bandage over his eyes, and he was once more utterly helpless.

“Turn thou round to the east and to the west,” said Bryan to the man whom he had designated as Tom-o'-the-Yew, “and having said thy prayers, take aim at this youth who wishes to be introduced into our company.”

A deadly paleness overspread the face of the herald; and it was well, perhaps, for his character, that his mouth was gagged, and his arms bandaged, or he might have betrayed that he was not just at his ease.

“Thou blinded archer,” said a clear sonorous voice in the crowd, which the herald could not recognise—“make ready thy bow, and endeavour to strike the heart of this aspirant—aim as if thine own life depended on the result.”

The herald formed an involuntary curse upon them all—

and he heard a noise, as if the archer was bending his bow. The next instant he recommended his soul to heaven, for he thought his last hour was come.

"Shaft of this blinded archer," said the same voice again, "if the man against whom thou art now directed, be a brave man and a true—if he hateth oppression, and loveth justice dearer than his life—if he prefer cold water in freedom to rich wine in slavery—if he never refused to share his roof and his crust with the weary and the hungry—spare him—and touch him not! But if he be a coward—a slave—a fawner or a churl, may thy steel pierce into his heart!"

A loud "amen" was uttered simultaneously by all present, and Tom-o'-the-Yew once more prepared to discharge his arrow. There was another moment of deep and solemn suspense, as the archer lifted his bow: and De Robaulx bit his lips, and held his breath, as if he would have compressed his frame into half its ordinary compass. In another instant, the shaft had sped—the arrow whizzed past the herald's ear, and a loud huzza rose from every one present—so loud, that it almost deafened him. He was at first so confused by the suddenness of the uproar, that he could not tell whether he was hit or not—but he thought he could hear the arrow quivering above his head. To his great relief, his eyes were immediately unbound, and looking at a tree within four inches of him, he saw the arrow firmly embedded in its trunk, but still shaking and trembling with its so recent discharge.

"A true man!—a true man!" was the cry that now arose, and his arms were immediately unpinioned, by order of Brownbuskin.

"Hail, brother!" said the latter, advancing, his face all covered with smiles, and shaking the still bewildered herald cordially by the hand; "hail, brother—thou hast passed the ordeal, and may now, if thou wilt take the oaths, be enrolled as one of us. Thou hast stood the trial well—and our band will be proud of thee."

"By the holy Virgin," said the herald, "I thought myself a dead man—did that rascal really take the best aim he could at me?"

"To be sure he did," replied Fitzosbert, "and if thou hadst been false-hearted, a coward, or a churl, the world would have been rid of thee by this time. There is wonderful virtue in Tom-o'-the-Yew's arrows—they never touch the brave and the true-hearted."

"Is there no devilry in them?" inquired the herald.

"Pooh! pooh! man," said Bryan. "But wilt thou take the oaths?"

"I will.—Administer them."

A circle of forty or fifty men was immediately formed, and each man drew his sword, and pointed it at the breast of the herald, who did not flinch or even wink, which few could have avoided doing at the sight of so much clear steel glittering in the moonshine.

It is useless to repeat the formula which bound him to inviolable secrecy as to all the proceedings of the band, and implicit obedience, in all matters pertaining to its common welfare, to the commands of its leader. He was also sworn never to obey the forest laws of the Normans, but to uphold all the ancient rights and privileges of the chase, enjoyed from time immemorial by the Saxon population; to do justice, and to love mercy, and to obey the laws of the realm in all other respects—never to see a poor man want, if he could relieve him—never to suffer a woman to be injured, or a strong man to oppress a weak one, if he could prevent it.

De Robaulx willingly took the oaths—the swords were dropped, and every man of the band successively shook hands with him. He was then led, or rather carried back to Brownbuskin's house, in the forest, where a sumptuous feast was prepared, and where due and most copious libations were drunk to the health and prosperity of the new member.

Next morning, the herald was up before the lark, and proceeding on his way towards London, charged with the instructions of Bryan Fitzosbert to his brother Longbeard, and with news of comfort to the sorrow-stricken heart of Jordan the tanner.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Carle—an the King come—

Carle—an the King come—

Thou shalt dance and I will sing,

Carle—an the King come.”

Jacobite Relics.

LEAVING De Robaulx to proceed on his journey to London (merely remarking, that somehow or other he contrived to take Greenhithe in his way, and to feel very tired for a couple of hours as he approached it, and that, of course, he rested in the house of his friend Tyke the brewer, and exchanged smiles and sighs with the pretty Phebe), we shall precede him thither, to relate the events that had taken place in his absence, and were destined to exercise an influence upon the personages of our story. The most careful observer could not have discovered from the face, the speech, or the actions

of William Longbeard, how deeply he was moved by the private calamity that had befallen him. His friend Jordan the tanner, heart-smitten at the loss of his children, was almost incapable of exertion; but the energies of Longbeard had suffered no diminution: his emissaries were at work in every part of London, trying to discover the retreat of the maidens, and he himself pursued the same inquiries with untiring zeal; and when the night arrived, and he found all his efforts fruitless, he sat him down to commune with his own heart as to what was to be done. The next day was that appointed for the interview of the Saxon delegates with Prince John, and he resolved to make the wrongs of himself and Jordan the ground of formal complaint, and learn from the manner in which the prince received it, whether any reliance were to be placed in his good intentions. He had, however, his misgivings that no justice was to be obtained, and that he could place no reliance upon any one, or look to any one for aid, except to his own right arm and his own adherents. If the noble Richard were in his own realm, he thought to himself, what evils might be spared! Law would once more reign paramount, and justice and equity govern the realm. Now, lust, rapine, insolence, and oppression of all kinds went unpunished, and every man was invited, by the absence of justice, to take the law into his own hands, and become the redresser of his own injuries. And such, he foresaw, would be the case in the present instance. But he resolved, nevertheless, to see what could be done—to go armed with the justice of his cause, as soon as he could with certainty discover the name of the betrayer and robber of his heart's dearest treasure, and seek for redress. At all events, on the morrow he would present himself, with the bereaved father, before Prince John—not as the pretender to his brother's crown, but as one of the regents of the kingdom, legally appointed by him—in order that he, so high in authority, should know how the Saxon population were trampled on by men of birth and fortune. This, it was true, was falling short of his original intentions two days before, when he had determined to seek the regent with the other delegates, and strike some grand blow for the deliverance of his countrymen. But the ambition that fired his heart was forgotten for awhile; the fires of his love had quenched those of glory for an instant, and all his thoughts for the deliverance of England were so bound up with the deliverance of Friedolinda Jordan, that he was scarcely able, even in his own heart, to separate them.

Rumours had been for some days rife in London that the necessary instalment of the ransom of Richard had been subscribed by the merchants, or wrung from the monks and

religious foundations—for the tax levied on the people came slowly in—and that Queen Eleanor had proceeded to Germany for the deliverance of her son from captivity. These rumours, which had been often raised, had as often died away again, until men began to treat them as mere idle fancies, and pay no attention to them. Longbeard had heard them so often that he placed no reliance in them; but when he heard, for a certain thing, that Queen Eleanor had quitted England, he began to hope, rather than believe, that the popular rumour of the king's return might be true. On proceeding with his brother-delegates to Westminster, he learned, to his great surprise, that some days before, Prince John had suddenly taken his departure from London, scared by the expected return of his brother, and conscious of his own want of support and popularity. No man seemed to know whither the prince had gone; some said he was hiding in England, and others that he had taken ship and sailed to Normandy. Queen Eleanor, they learned, had left the realm, and the Archbishop of Canterbury alone, of all the regents, was left to govern an unsettled country. Edgar, Athelstane, Konig, and the other Saxon chiefs, looked in each other's faces, uncertain how to proceed, or what to do. With one consent, they all turned back again towards the city—Longbeard and Jordan the tanner leading the way. As they passed the sanctuary near the venerable abbey of Westminster, they noticed that an unusual crowd was stationed without, and thither they all proceeded, to learn what was the matter. They ascertained that the Archbishop of Canterbury with the Bishops of London, Winchester, and other high ecclesiastical dignitaries, were within, and that the excommunication of Prince John, for treason to his royal brother, and disobedience to the commands of the church, had just been solemnly pronounced, and was to be proclaimed throughout the realm without delay. "If you make haste to Temple-bar," said their informer, "you will hear the ban pronounced. I would not stand in the shoes of the Earl of Moreton for all the wealth of England."

Longbeard and his companions hastened into the city, and found the people collected together in groups, discussing the events of the day. As soon as he appeared, they raised a shout of triumph, and formed themselves around him. He soon found himself at the head of a thousand men, and with this escort he marched to their usual place of meeting at Paul's Cross, to advise upon the state of London. Here he found a still greater crowd assembled. There was Fitzalwyne, the mayor of London, clothed in complete steel, and mounted on a war-horse, with an escort of aldermen in their scarlet and

furred gowns, and their gold chains about their necks; with the sheriffs, in their state trappings, and several members of the common-council. A poursuivant, our old acquaintance, De Jointry, in the midst, on horseback, stood up in his stirrups and proclaimed, with a loud voice, that John Earl of Moreton was a traitor and a heretic; and warned all men to beware of aiding or countenancing him, lest they should suffer the death of abettors of treason. He announced at the same time, that the ransom of King Richard had been paid—that he had landed at Sandwich—that all the people had flocked around him—and that he was hourly expected in his faithful city of London, to reward his friends and take fierce vengeance upon his enemies. He ended by calling upon all present to shout, long life to King Richard.

Fitzalwyne took off his cap and waved it in the air, and shouted, with a stentorian voice, "Long life to Richard Cœur de Lion—long life to the King of England."

Longbeard did the same, and all his followers, by one accord, joined in the cry; and "long life to King Richard" resounded through the city.

Fitzalwyne darted a look—half contempt, half anger—at Longbeard, and rode off to Cheapside, attended by the sheriffs, the city dignitaries of all degrees, and the poursuivant, again to make the same announcement; and Longbeard was left, with the Saxon deputation, and the crowd of his followers, in undisputed possession of the open space at Paul's Cross.

As soon as the mayor and his cortège were out of sight, he mounted to the little stone rostrum erected in front of the cathedral, and taking off his cap, waved it triumphantly in the air, and cried with a loud voice, "Richard for ever! God save Richard, King of England."

Jordan the tanner, Nicholas Bamme, William Brewer, and the other more immediate friends of Longbeard, took up the cry with enthusiasm; and the crowd gathering in strength and numbers every minute, swelled the triumphant shout; and "Richard for ever! God save Richard, King of England," was repeated again and again, in the exuberance of public joy. The people then waved their greasy caps in renewed exultation, and Longbeard, his head uncovered, smoothed back the hair from his brow, folded his arms upon his breast, and awaited their silence, in order to address them upon the new turn which public affairs had taken. With many efforts comparative silence was obtained, but as soon as Longbeard began to speak, every man in the numerous assembly composed himself to listen.

The speaker began in a low but clear, distinct voice, which gradually rose in strength as he proceeded the words falling

one after the other like the notes in a complete piece of music—without pause, without hesitation, stammering, or repetition. So appropriate were all, that the omission of one would have destroyed the harmony, and each was exactly the word that a finished orator would have employed to combine force with elegance, and yet not soar above the comprehension of those whom he was addressing. He called upon them to rejoice with thankful hearts for the deliverance of their king, and to pray to the great disposer of events, that good might result therefrom to the disturbed and unhappy realm of England; that the return of a monarch for whose sorrows they had all sympathised during his captivity, might have the effect of reconciling the differences which prevailed between the Norman and Saxon races; and that under his firm and settled rule, justice might once more raise her head in the land, and be respected by all men;—that the Norman might no longer be overbearing and insolent, that the Saxon no longer have cause for repining and discontent.

“Let us show him,” said the orator, “that he has faithful hearts among the men of London, and having proved our fidelity and our love—let us lay our grievances at his feet, and the soldier of the Cross will redress them! Let our first welcome be one of joy and gratitude to heaven; let us not mar the triumph of our king’s first entry into his capital, by the voice of wail. We have most of us had our sorrows—we have most of us had our wrongs, and all will be redressed in due time. Even I, brothers and men of London—even I, who have been so long occupied with your woes as to forget my own, have been smitten in the sorest part. Our friend Jordan has been bereaved of his children, and I, of the one that in all this earth was dearest to my soul! When we have given the king the first triumphal shout of welcome, and when his heart may be softened by the proof of our loyalty and affection, then all of you—ay, every one who has been robbed or oppressed, or insulted, or beaten, or suffered any kind of wrong without redress, shall join with me in suing for justice against those who were appointed to administer it. Shamefully they abused their trust, when they knew that the watchful eye of the brave Richard was not over them. We will plead our cause with a million voices, and the oppressors may be removed from their place of power. We will trust in the king, but we will not trust too blindly—my care shall ever wake in the cause of the Saxon. Who, in all England, bestowed one thought upon the poor man, until I arose to preach, even to the humblest, that he was a man, and that he had feelings and rights, as well as the rich man? Not one. I was the apostle of the poor, and no man cared for them, till

I arose to shield and to plead for them. And shall I forsake them now? Oh, no! You will have no other friend to plead your cause; and while the blood warms my heart—while there is power of speech on my tongue, and of motion in my right hand, I will never forsake you! And you, brothers and men of London, I know that you will not forsake me! You know the number of enemies I have gained, because I loved you! You know how they seek my destruction—how they lay traps for me—how they bring false accusations against me—how they employ assassins to watch me in the street and stab me! You know what they have done and what they will do, and how odious I am, because I have maintained your rank as men and your rights as citizens. For this they have stolen the children of our heart-broken friend, Jordan:—and for this they will never rest till they ensure my destruction. And they will succeed, unless you stand by me, in your hundreds and your thousands, and your tens of thousands. They will take the occasion of the king's return to unite against and crush me, unless you prevent them by forming a wall of manly hearts around me. Will you be true to your friend? Will you stand by William Fitzosbert?"

The speaker paused, and every head in the vast assembly instantly became uncovered, and caps innumerable were waved triumphantly in the air, while the crowd, as if by one consent, shouted "Longbeard for ever! long live Longbeard, the friend of the poor!" How intoxicating is the draught of popular applause! At that moment, Longbeard was as happy as man could be. He was at the pinnacle of power and glory! For him were the hearts of the people,—for him were the acclamations of the multitude—he was the popular idol, and for him, deformed, oppressed, and heart-smitten, was all the incense of the crowd; and in that thought he forgot all his sorrows, and confessed in his secret soul that he had not struggled in vain. Little did he think, in the inebriation of that triumph, how evanescent was the favour he had built upon—how more unstable than the sea-sand, or the light clouds that drift before the summer wind, was the love of the people. The shouts died away; but they died away only to be renewed again, and again, and again, until it seemed as if the multitude were becoming mad in their joy, and would have snatched their idol from the spot on which he stood, and borne him in their arms in triumphal procession.

As their last shout was dying away, from the sheer exhaustion of those who raised it, a loud flourish of trumpets was heard in the direction of the Strand, together with the beating of drums, the trampling of horses, and the exclamations of another multitude. Every eye was turned in this

direction, and Longbeard, standing on tip-toe, and raising himself by the rail, endeavoured to ascertain the cause of the tumult. His first thought was, that his old foe, Fitzalwyne, was coming with his men-at-arms to disperse the Saxons at Paul's Cross; but he soon banished this idea, for the mayor of London was never escorted in this manner, and never received the acclamations of such a crowd as followed in that train. A cry was raised by some one near him, that it was the king—and the truth immediately flashed upon his mind, that it could be no other. Windows were thrown open on Ludgate-hill, and handkerchiefs were waved as the cavalcade drew nigh, while the tumult still kept increasing—and the trumpets sounded forth their sonorous notes of triumph. The crowd around Longbeard caught up the cry—and “the king—the king!” resounded from every side. In an instant afterward, the mass of living men divided like a wave cleft by the prow of an advancing vessel, and a man in a complete suit of burnished steel, mounted upon a horse richly caparisoned, and followed by a brilliant array of knights in glittering armour, rode into the midst, and stopped immediately before the cross. He was a man with a frank open expression of countenance, strongly built in limb, of capacious breadth of shoulders, and of a stature approaching to five feet eleven; his hair was of a sandy-red, his eyes bright, quick, and sparkling, and his teeth white, well formed and regular. Longbeard knew him immediately, as did in fact every one present in the crowd, and stepping down from the cross, he called upon the people to shout, “God save king Richard!” The bray of the trumpets ceased as the multitude obeyed, and as the din of the popular applause was again raised more furious than ever for its new idol, the object of it courteously took off his glittering helm, and bowed bare-headed to the people, turning round on every side with a good-humoured smile, as he saw the thousand burly, broad faces that were upturned towards him in every direction. It was full five minutes before the acclamations ceased, the king bowing at intervals all the while with a politeness that must have been fatiguing, until a herald at last advancing, blew a loud blast upon his bannered trumpet, and commanded silence. The king then raised himself in his stirrups, and his helmet still in his hand, addressed his attentive auditory:

“We are proud, O men of London, of the warm welcome you have given us—let this day be a holiday!”

There was another burst of acclamation at this short speech.

“We are pleased,” continued the king, “to see that the men of London have been true to us, while there have been so many traitors in other parts of the country—but though a

king, we can be grateful, and we shall not forget you when the hour arrives, when we can reward you."

The roar that burst forth from the crowd, was like the roar of a tempest; and the king rode on, followed by his gay cavalcade of nobles, and knights, and men-at-arms, and heralds and pousuivants, and a great multitude, The latter was now increased by all the former auditory of Longbeard, who swept along like a flood, hallooing in the exuberance of their joy, till they reached the Guildhall of London, into which the king entered.

It is not necessary that we should detail the scene which followed. The oath of allegiance was taken by Fitzalwyne, the mayor, the sheriffs, the aldermen, and all the functionaries and men of note who were present, including William Longbeard, who was received by the king with marked kindness. Longbeard had served under his banner in the Holy Land, and had performed deeds of surpassing valour, and reckless daring, which it was impossible to forget, and which were the surest means of gaining the good-will of a monarch, who thought courage the very first of all the virtues,—and loved it the more, the more desperate it was. Longbeard bore the honour meekly, and merely looked quietly aside, to see what impression it made upon his foe Fitzalwyne. There was a flush upon the face of the latter as he turned away his head, but he thought of the immense multitudes without, by whom Longbeard was adored,—he remembered that this was not the time to urge his complaints, if he urged them at all, and he held his peace. This ceremony over, the king rode back in similar state to Westminster Hall, and gave that night a sumptuous banquet in celebration of his return. Longbeard and Jordan the tanner withdrew, unnoticed by the crowd, to hold commune together on their prospects, and to mingle thoughts of the public cause with the private grief that hung heavily upon the minds of both of them.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Are the rogues trusty?

Well tried—and staunch to a man?"

Her Fair Fame's her Dowry.

THE king's return to London was as unexpected as it was gratifying to the citizens, who had never forgotten during his captivity the favour he had shown them on his accession to the throne. After landing at Sandwich, he had marched on from triumph to triumph, and having shown himself in his capital, and received the allegiance of its dignitaries, he pre-

pared on the morrow to set out for Nottingham; the castle of which still held out in the cause of his brother John, who in that part of the country had thrown off the mask more completely than he had dared to do in London. Before his departure, however, Longbeard sought and obtained an audience of him—the causes and the results of which, we shall now lay before the reader. Jordan and he, linked together more firmly than ever, by the common bereavement which they both deplored, retired to the house of Longbeard in Watling-street; for the worthy tanner was so afflicted at the sight of his own lonely and deserted dwelling; he felt so acutely the silence that reigned in it, instead of the former merry laugh and cheerful song of his beloved Marian; it seemed so dark and desolate without her bright face; it seemed so chill and comfortless without the smile of Friedolinda, that he did not care to sit in it alone. He went therefore with Longbeard, to gain comfort from his words, for he knew not where else to look for it, and to form plans for the discovery of his little ones. But, if truth must be told, Longbeard was not the best comforter he could have had; the father thought only of his children, but the lover had other thoughts. The king's return might be the crisis of his fate, and a great work was to be accomplished. Now was the time big with the deliverance of the Saxon race; now was the time to secure his own triumph and the freedom of those who looked up to him as their leader; now, when the shouts of mob applause and the kind words of royal favour were both sounding in his ears, was the moment when the die should be cast, and the blow struck, that was to crown his life and fulfil the ardent aspirations he had cherished since a boy. He quite forgot that he was a lover and that he had lost his beloved one; and he paced his room, with a kindling eye and a flushed face, heedless that any one was present. He talked at intervals to himself, and the tanner, who looked on him with interest, but without surprise, distinguished now and then a broken ejaculation, by which he could guess what was passing in his mind. He saw how lofty were his hopes; how great was his ambition; and at the same time, how noble were his schemes for the improvement and elevation of his countrymen: and he never once interrupted his musings. Thus they remained for a few minutes, when his glance accidentally met the eye of Longbeard.—The latter started. The grief-worn countenance of the bereaved father smote upon his conscience, and he blushed to think, that even for a moment, he should have forgotten the dear tie that bound them together in misfortune. "Forgive me, Jordan," he said, "but my heart is full of the things that are to be done, and that must be done; and the

burdens I have taken upon me make me forget your sorrow and my own too. Let us employ this day in seeking to discover our treasures—the morrow will be sufficient for the great cause of freedom. But, why should I separate them? Is not the evil that has been done us a weapon which we can wield?—Is not our private wrong a public grievance? In seeking to redress the one, do we not redress the other?”

The tanner heaved a deep sigh, and folded his arms upon his breast; but his heart was too full for speech.

“Is it not strange that we can gain no tidings,” continued Longbeard, speaking to himself as much as to his companion; “that there is no trace of them by land or water? Have you sent to all the gates of the city?”

“Ay, to every one,” replied the tanner; “but they have not gone that way. If they are not in London still, they must have gone down by the river. I will follow. There is no use in remaining here. I have remained already too long. I will go ashore at every landing-place. I will inquire at every village, hamlet, or hut, upon the banks of the Thames, until I find where they put ashore. I will traverse all England, rather than tamely give up the search, and resign myself to my loss. Oh, William Fitzosbert, were you as true a lover as so beautiful and so good a maid should have, you would help me more than you have done?”

Longbeard made no answer, but a melancholy smile played upon his lips.

“Ah! woe is me!” continued the tanner; “the glory of my house is departed—the hope of my old age is quenched—and there is no more comfort for me. I am of no use upon the earth. Who shall restore to me my children?”

Longbeard took his friend's hand. “What did you say just now, Jordan? That you would never tamely give up the search, and resign yourself to the loss? Have you forgotten already? Come, we will not despair—there is fire in your eyes yet—there is energy in your heart still—and we will struggle together till we succeed. I know the ready mind and the sound sense of my sweet Friedolinda, and she will find means to let us know where she is. She will aid us, though unseen, and we, in the meantime, will exert ourselves. The glory of your house shall return, and the hopes of your old age revive again.”

“There is comfort in your words, William Longbeard, and I will act; I will think no more, but I will do.”

“Here comes a friend, even now,” interrupted Longbeard, who stood at the window and looked into the street, “one who has ridden a long way, and who, I am sure, brings us some news or other.”

The tanner was at his side in an instant, and looking into the street he saw the herald at the door. Without giving him time to dismount, the father sprang down the stairs, and in an instant De Robaulx had dismounted, and was led into the hall of William Longbeard, where twenty questions were put to him before he had time to answer one. His story, however, was soon told, and both Jordan and Longbeard listened with eager attention. It produced a wonderful effect upon the tanner—his eye sparkled—the energy of former days returned, and he paced the room with a quick firm step, swearing between his teeth that he would take a fierce vengeance upon the spoiler. Longbeard was more calm, but not less decided. “Can you ride, Jordan?” said he, suddenly, to his friend.

“I could fly!” replied the latter; “and ere I sleep, I will be on the road to Willenden.”

“You shall go to the forests, and see my brother;—his plan is good. We will proceed this night together, and summon this Norman ravager to give up his prey, and if he refuse, may the evil that shall ensue light upon his head, and upon his only. You shall see, Jordan, that I am no laggard lover of so true and beautiful a maid. The way will not be long, if love and revenge lend their speed to the limbs; and I have some hundreds of trusty fellows who will be glad to accompany us, if need be; some twenty, however, will be sufficient for our purpose. I will not rest until this thing be done.”

“Thou art my best friend—thou art mine only friend, Longbeard,” said the tanner, giving his hand a grasp sufficient to dislocate his fingers; “the world is not all dark whilst thou art in it.”

“Have you any preparations to make, Jordan?” said Longbeard, returning the friendly pressure of his palm.

“No, not any; I am ready at a moment. By heaven!” he continued fervently, “I feel as strong and as nimble as if I were but twenty, instead of threescore-and-five.”

“Ay, but you cannot ride threescore miles, I fear me, nor I either, willing as I am; nor is it requisite. I have a good skiff, and am no mean sailor, as you know. The vessel will hold fifty men comfortably, and our departure will attract no observation. We will have her prepared for this night;—is the wind fair?”

“Ay, it blows merrily to the west,” interposed the herald, with his mouth half full, for he had been helping himself to some cold beef and bread that stood on the table, during this colloquy; “and you may be in the Medway

before daylight. You will not have far to ride after you get there."

"Wilt thou join us, De Robaulx?" said the tanner.

"Not to-night, as I am a living man," replied the herald; "I have no notion of killing myself for want of proper food and rest. Zounds! I have been on the tramp, and have starved besides for the last eight days. No; let me have a good sleep and a good breakfast, and I will do anything you like. Until that, I am the friend of nobody, and can aid nobody."

"As thou wilt, friend," said Longbeard; "thou hast been a willing and a trusty messenger; but when wilt thou come?"

"To-morrow, depend upon me," said the herald, still eating; "my horse wants rest as well as myself; but ere to-morrow noon I will be on my way to join you; there is a great question to be decided thereabouts, to which I am a party; so that I should have gone, even if you had not."

"I forgot," said Longbeard, smiling, "thou, too, art a lover; but if thou lovest well and truly, I pity thee from my soul."

"Keep your pity," said the herald, bluntly; "my love is not of your puling heart-breaking sort; but I know what you mean—Marian Jordan is a sweet wench—but she does not love me—but shall I die, therefore? Not I."

"Ah, well," interrupted the old man, somewhat impatiently. "we will speak of that hereafter; but curse me, sirrah, if ever I support thy suit again, as thou seemest to set so little store on my daughter. I'faith, there are proper men in London, besides thee, and she could make her choice of a thousand of them."

"Well said, old Jordan," replied the herald, laughing loudly at this ebullition; "and thy daughter Marian, I will own it, deserves all thy praises, and a thousand times more. There is not another girl in Christendom has a brighter eye, or a ruddier cheek, or that is lovelier, more virtuous, and more bewitching altogether. Were she as kind as she is fair, I know the day when I would have worshipped her as a divinity, and kissed the ground she walked upon."

"But the time presses," said Longbeard; "leave this love-gossip just now, for these matters can be discussed hereafter. Follow us when thou wilt, thou shalt have a hearty welcome, as thou hast here. So eat, drink, and sleep, and recruit thy strength, while we take measures for our departure this night. Jordan, come hither. I have something for thy private ear. Go thou and find our friend Nicholas Bamme," he said in a half whisper, drawing him to the embrasure of the window. "He is, doubtless, at the bowls at Holy Well;

tell him to collect twenty of his stanchest hearts—twenty of those who love Longbeard, and who will serve him with most zeal in a matter that is most precious to his soul; and to meet at thy house on the bridge—no, thy tanyard on the water-side at Bermondsey, at dusk this evening, and we will discourse further. In the meantime let no man know—not even Bamme himself—that we are to leave London for an hour. I would have no man know it. Till evening, then, farewell.”

So saying, Longbeard quitted the apartment, and the herald having finished his meal, leaned back in his seat, as if he were disposed to slumber. The tanner left him to repose, and wended his way by Cheapside and Paul’s Cross to Temple-bar, and thence up the Strand to St. Clement Danes. Fitzstephen the monk, who lived at the period of our story, says, in his description of London which we have already quoted, that there were then three principal fountains, called Holy Well, Clement’s Well, and Clerk’s Well, the waters of which were, to use the words of Stow’s translation, “sweete, wholesome, and cleere, and much frequented by schollers and youth of the cite in summer evenings, when they walked forth to take the aire.” It was to the first of these that the tanner proceeded. A considerable crowd of young men and others had assembled around the Well—some for exercise and some for recreation—while in the fields around a variety of sports were carried on by the boys of the city. At the distance of fifty or sixty yards from the well, towards the banks of the Thames—a full view of which, and the flat but verdant coast of the opposite shore, could be commanded from the spot—some ten or a dozen youths were gathered, anxiously watching a pair of bantams, which had been set to fight for their amusement, and betting each upon his favourite bird. Further on, a troop of nimble boys were enjoying themselves at the healthful and inspiring game of the ball. Among the trees, between Holy Well and St. Clement’s, a few stray couples were promenading, finding more pleasure in conversing alone in the shade, than in joining or witnessing the sports that were going on around them. Close beside the fountain were a company of artisans, whom the tanner at once recognised as old acquaintances, and amongst the rest was Nicholas Bamme, the man he was in search of, playing at bowls, as Longbeard had predicted. To him, who was fatter and burlier than himself, though more active, Jordan communicated his message at once, and met a ready answer.

“I will be with you at the time, never fear me—and how many fellows—the stoutest did you say—twenty?”

“Twenty will do,” said the tanner.

"I know double that number who would be happy to come—but what's the matter? do you know?"

"Ay," replied the tanner, "and I hope it will not cool thee—my daughters!"

"Cool me? what d'ye mean?" said Bamme, quickly. "Zounds, man, I would do anything for your daughters!—and have you found out the villains?"

"We are not sure," said Jordan.

"Well, I'm your man," replied Bamme; "I'll finish my game, and set about the business immediately."

"Thou wilt not fail?"

"If I live, I will be with you."

"And the twenty?"

"If there are twenty live Saxons in London, at the appointed time they shall be among your foul-smelling hides at Bermondsey, ere the evening star peeps out. You might, however, have chosen a cleaner place—faugh!—of all odours, keep me from those of a tanyard."

"Well, say as thou likest—but if thou failest, after having promised, I will tan thy hide when we meet again."

"God forbid!" said Bamme, "I had rather have my head stuck on London-bridge, than be killed with foul smells. Have some strong ale when we come, to clear our throats."

"Barrels of it," replied the tanner; "and now we understand each other."

"Ay—give us thy hand."

The pair shook hands, and parted,—Nicholas Bamme, to finish his game, which had been interrupted by the colloquy, and the tanner, after exchanging greetings with the other artisans whom he knew, returned to report what he had done, to William Longbeard.

CHAPTER XX.

"—— As I came nigh,
Out of my boat the king me saw,
And bade me come into his barge,
And when I was with him at large,
Amongst other things said
He had a charge upon me laid."—GOWER.

At dusk, the same evening, a little fast-sailing cutter was moored at Bermondsey, off the tanyard of Jordan. Few people were stirring upon the river; now and then a man might be seen on the look-out in one of the vessels at anchor off Thames-street, or Wapping, or the watchman at the Tower, pacing his rounds on the platform. The bustle of the day was

over, and no traces remained to show how important a day it had been for London, except the royal standard of England proudly floating from the bridge-gate, and from the frowning fortress of the Tower, hoisted there in honour of the king's arrival.

Longbeard and Jordan, with Nicholas Bamme and his stalwart Saxons, were all punctual at the place of meeting. It was difficult, however, for so many persons to embark at so unusual an hour, without attracting observation; and this difficulty having been duly considered by Longbeard, it was resolved that he and Jordan should embark alone, and that Bamme and his men should proceed along shore, in separate groups, and by different roads, till they got beyond Greenwich, when the cutter might put to, and take them all on board. In pursuance of this plan, Bamme and his artisans took their departure, and the crew of Longbeard's cutter, which he had named the Friedolinda, raised the anchor, set their sails to catch the favourable breeze, and dropped with the tide down the river. A beautiful full moon shone forth, and every object on the stream was almost as visible as at noon-day; not a sound broke the silence, save the light ripple of the waters, as the prow of the vessel cut through them. Longbeard entrusted the whole care of the cutter to the steersman, who had served him faithfully and long, and to the crew, which consisted but of three men; and in pensive mood he stood on the deck alone, gazing at the waters, but seeing them not, for his thoughts were far away. The tanner was equally reserved and silent; his soul was with his daughters, and he was passing away the weary time by recalling to his memory all the pretty infantine tricks which years ago had so delighted him in his Marian. But his fancy having dwelt upon these agreeable visions for awhile, suddenly took a darker shade, and conjured before his mental eye, pictures of suffering and sorrow. He saw both in the rude grasp of their betrayer—he heard their piteous cries for help, and swore in his secret soul what a dire revenge he would take for the wrongs they had endured. And then he rose and paced the deck till he was weary, then he sat down again to brood over the same hopes and the same fears, and to think how slowly passed the time, and how long was the distance that separated him from those whom he best loved: from his Friedolinda, so kind and gentle—from his Marian, so merry and playful. In less than an hour they were abreast of the church of Greenwich, and Longbeard gave directions to reef the sails and drop more gently down beyond the village, and then lay to, and await the arrival of Bamme and his company. They had not long to wait; Bamme and his men were sturdy trampers, and

arrived every two or three minutes in small detachments. The last man had got safely on board—the anchor was raised, the sails were unfurled, and the little vessel had shot out into the mid-stream, when Longbeard observed another vessel bearing the royal flag, making all sail towards them, at the distance of scarcely more than two hundred yards. In an instant after, another became visible, and then a third. Jordan and Bamme, and the rest, looked into each other's faces, silently inquiring what this could mean? Longbeard stood motionless for a moment, and his resolution was taken. In the disturbed state of the country, it was not likely, if they suffered themselves to be overtaken by this superior force, that they would be allowed to proceed; but would most probably be taken back to London, and forced to explain the circumstances under which they were found. The sole hope left, was to crowd all sail, and endeavour to escape them, and orders to that effect were immediately given. The white sails filled with the breeze and flapped merrily, as the cutter ploughed her way through the waters. Longbeard, in a few words, explained to his friends the state of affairs, and whither they were bound, and all his reasons for not wishing to be overtaken. That the vessels now so close upon them contained a royal force, he could not for a moment doubt, and it would not be easy for him to explain why so many men were assembled in the "Friedolinda," and whither they were bound; and if he did, he would not be believed at a time when treason was so rife, and when every man was bound to prove that he was not concerned in the projects of the ambitious John against the throne of his brother. As it was absolutely necessary for his peace, and that of their worthy friend Jordan, that their expedition should proceed, he asked, if they would support him? Every man assented, and all were ordered to keep below, while Longbeard, Jordan, and the crew, would alone remain upon deck. But this command was difficult to enforce. There was a fierce excitement in the chase, and the eyes of the men flashed fire—their faces glowed, and their hearts beat high, and one and all entreated that they might remain above to watch the issue.

"I should give up the ghost in the cabin," said Bamme, "if I did not see how bravely we shall outsail them—see how this little thing flies along."

"Hurrah! hurrah!" shouted the men as they turned the point, and for a minute lost sight of the sails of the pursuers. "Hurrah!" As the shout died away, the first of them rounded the point, and then another, and another, till all four, the pursuers and the pursued, were fairly in the reach, and scudding gallantly before the wind. Longbeard, Jordan, and

Bamme stood together, intently gazing; Bamme now and then casting a look of admiration at the steersman, who taking advantage of every current in the river, and of every breath of wind, and of every accident of the navigation, was rapidly increasing the distance between them and their pursuers. As they stood, an arrow discharged from the foremost vessel whizzed between them, and stuck in the mast, within an inch of Bamme's head.

"Ha! by St. Peter," said he, "I would give a thousand marks, if I had them, to be able to take as good an aim at the fellow who shot that. If I had not chanced to move my head, I should have been at this moment in purgatory, or a worse place."

Another arrow whizzed in the air, and passing between the group, went over the side of the vessel.

"Can't we return these greetings?" said Jordan to Longbeard; but the latter, heedless of the question, had fixed his eyes upon a tall martial figure, who, with a crossbow in his hand, in the foremost vessel, had just discharged the arrows, and whose form was distinctly visible in the moonlight.

"By heaven!" said Bamme, turning to his companions, "this is too bad, that there should not be one crossbow amongst us."

"There are some below," said Jordan, who overheard the remark, "enough to arm every one of us."

"Out with them, then!" replied Bamme, and he attempted to spring down the hatchway, when the arm of Longbeard suddenly arrested him.

"Stop!" said he, "'tis the king. Reef the sails, my men, and drop the anchor. We cannot escape Cœur-de-Lion."

The order was scarcely given ere it was executed; the helmsmen swang the vessel round; the sails were slowly furled, and the little cutter arrested in its course. The first of the pursuing vessels was now abreast of the "Friedolinda," and the other two were closely behind. About a dozen persons were on the deck of the first, and among them an elderly lady, in rich attire. Every eye on board the "Friedolinda" recognised the King of England and his mother, Queen Eleanor of Guienne, with their suite of courtiers. The royal party were bound for the nunnery at Barking, and horses were waiting them on the river bank opposite Woolwich, to convey the queen thither, the king intending to accompany her, and see her safe within the walls, and then return to London.

Longbeard knelt on the deck of his vessel, and made his obeisance to the king; while Bamme and his men took off their caps, and wondered sorely at such a meeting in such a place.

"How now, William Fitzosbert!" said the king, in a tone of much anger. "What does this mean? Whither art thou bound in such suspicious company?"

"My liege lord," replied Longbeard, "you know I am a true man; I have nothing to conceal."

"Explain thyself, then, shortly," said the king. "The realm is full of evil: treason walks upon the land and sails upon the water; and no man knows whether his neighbour be faithful. But out with thy story."

"If he be a true subject," interposed the queen, "as I believe, let him step on board of this vessel, and explain this matter to our ear."

"Madam," said Longbeard, with the utmost respect of manner, "there are two of us—and two only—concerned, and neither of us entertains a thought against the duty we owe to our liege lord and sovereign King Richard, whom God save. Shout, my lads—God save the King!"

The men to whom he had addressed himself obeyed the command, the voice of Bamme swelling loudly above the rest.

"Well," said Richard, "step hither with the other thou speakest of, and see if thou canst explain why thou hast fled before us like a traitor."

The boat was lowered at a signal from the king, and being rowed close to the "Friedolinda," Longbeard and Jordan stepped in, Bamme having in vain asked leave to join the party, and were conveyed to the royal vessel, which bore the name of the "True Man of London."

The king stood on the deck, his mother at his right hand, and the lords De Bohun, Delahide, Percy, Warrenden, and other soldiers around him.

"Who is this man?" said the king, pointing to the burly figure of Jordan, who twirled his cap in his hand, and looked upon the ground, not daring to cast his eyes to the majesty of England, in whose presence he had never stood before. "He does not seem a bold traitor, at all events."

"Speak for thyself, Jordan," said Longbeard; "if a good cause can make a man eloquent, thou shouldst speak well."

"Thou seemest a strong burly fellow," said the king, while Jordan gave his cap an additional twirl or two, before he looked up—"thou shouldst have a tongue."

"My liege," said the citizen, gaining courage by degrees, "my name is Jordan, a tanner; and many a fine piece of hide of my tanning, your Grace has sat upon."

"Egad!" said the king, to his mother, "this may be an honest fellow!—and so thou art a tanner?"

"Yes, an' please you, my liege; and the saddle on which

you rode at the siege of Acre—and I say it with pride—was made of leather from my yard at Bermondsey.”

“Ah! well, well,” said Richard, laughing, “and so thou art Jordan the tanner. I think I have been told that thou wert a discontented knave.”

“I was never discontented till now, please you, my liege,” said Jordan—all whose confidence had returned—“I never had reason until now; and my heart is breaking.”

“May I speak, my liege?” said Longbeard.

“Ay, speak on,” said the king.

“This worthy man, my liege, had two daughters, and it was confessed by everybody that they were the two best and most beautiful maids in London.”

“I have heard the young men talk of them,” said Eleanor—“perfect paragons, if they were to be believed.”

“Their loveliness, madam, has been the cause of their sorrow, and of ours too. The eldest was betrothed to me; but injustice and treason and tyranny lifting up their heads in the absence of the king, rode rampant over the land; and they have been among the many victims that have been crushed. I ask your Grace to redress the wrong they have suffered.”

“But what is their wrong?” said the king, impatiently.

“They were set upon at their door in the broad daylight, in the city of London, my liege, by a party of armed men, and carried away; and my heart bleeds to think what may have befallen them.”

“But who has done this thing?” said Richard.

“Sir William Le Boutelier, the lord of Willenden, as we have been given to understand,” replied Longbeard.

“The false hound!” said the king, “I never thought well of him, or of any man who could stay in idleness in England, when the cross wanted his arm in the Holy Land;—out upon all such chamberers and sluggards! Well, go on.”

“And we are going, my liege, if your Grace will give us permission, to see if we have been rightly informed, and to devise means for their rescue.”

“But why all this escort? why such a troop of fellows in your ship?”—

“My liege,” replied Longbeard, “the man who has committed this outrage upon two innocent maidens, would not hesitate to consummate his wrong, by sacrificing the lover of one, and the father of both, if they trusted themselves unprotected in his grasp. We go, thus guarded, as a matter of caution, my liege, and with no traitorous thoughts.”

“But this is not the way that the wrong should be redressed,” said the king.

"My liege," replied Longbeard, "we go to convince ourselves that he indeed, as we have been informed, is the spoiler; the issue we are well content to leave in your hands."

"Oh! madam, intercede for us," said Jordan to the queen; "you have been a mother, and you know what a parent's heart is made of. They were the pride of my heart, madam; the solace of my age; they were all I cared for in this world, and I have lost them both—both my little ones—unless you, madam, will aid us. We seek no revenge; I only want justice and my children."

"Hear him, my liege—hear him," said Longbeard; "there is no falsehood there—the heart spoke, my liege."

"But why did you seek to escape?" said the king; "why did you crowd all sail, thus to avoid us?"

"My liege," said Longbeard, "we knew not who might be our pursuers. Injustice has carried things with a high hand so long, that we thought our best plan was to avoid recognition. We could not have expected that the king himself, the fountain of justice—the love of all his people, was among them. We should not have hesitated for one moment, to explain our cause, our motives, and our objects, had we known that Cœur-de-Lion was to decide upon it."

"That's well said, William Fitzosbert," said the king, stroking his chin, and apparently satisfied that the argument was weighty.

"My liege!" said the queen to her son, "whatever your Grace may think of William Fitzosbert, I am satisfied there is no guile in the tanner. I would answer for the tanner with my own life."

"May the God of heaven bless and reward you!" said Jordan, fervently, and making an effort to grasp her hand; "the prayers of a sorrow-stricken father shall be put up for you night and morning; and God, the father of us all, will not listen to them in vain."

"Well—well," said Richard, "I dare say what you have told me is true—but I tell thee this, William Fitzosbert, no man ever deceived me, that did not rue it."

"My liege, I am without guile in the matter.—I have lost my heart's best treasure—next to its honesty—and am but seeking to recover her. Deal with me as you will, if you find that I have deceived you."

"Go then on thy way; but let there be no violence—let there be no bloodshed or breaking of the law. And thou, my worthy skin-dresser, thou shalt tan leather for another saddle for me, if I find thee true. And let me know the result. If William Le Boutelier have done this deed, and if he have harmed the maiden, he shall marry her."

"She is my betrothed, my liege—my heart's best beloved! it would be poor recompence to her or to me."

"Then he shall marry the other; there are two of them, didst thou not say?"

"Ay, my liege; but they would die rather than espouse him," said Longbeard.

"Well," replied the king, "he shall make reparation in some way—I swear it, by the cross! Such outrages shall not be permitted in the realm of England while I am ruler of it. You may go."

Longbeard and Jordan bent low before the king and Queen Eleanor, and having entered the boat, were rowed back to their own vessel. Longbeard explained in a few words to Bammie the pleasant termination of what at first appeared to be a very unpleasant business, and the artisans gave three loud cheers for the king. The royal vessels then took the lead down the river, the "Friedolinda" following. The former came to an anchor at the mouth of the little river Roding, or, as it is now termed, Barking Creek, where the king and queen, and their suite, disembarked, and their horses being ready, rode across the country to Barking Nunnery. The "True Man of London," and the others in its convoy, remained to await the flow of the tide, before they returned to London, and the "Friedolinda" sailed merrily on towards the Nore.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Mery it was in the grene forest,

Among the leves grene,

Whereas men hunt both east and west,

With bowes and arrowes kene.

* * *

"They broke the parks, and slew the deer,

Of all they chose the best;

* * *

Have you here my treasure? said William."

* * *

*Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and
William of Cloudeslye.*

ALL that night they made such rapid progress, that by an early hour on the morrow they were in sight of the small fishing village of Whitstable. Here Longbeard determined to land, and proceed on foot across the country to the forests of Blean. Their appearance excited some wonder and alarm in the miserable village, each man having well armed himself from the store-cabin of the "Friedolinda." The captain was

ordered to lie at anchor off the place until their return; and the whole party having recovered from the uneasy qualms of their sea voyage, tramped forward, bending their course due south. They were soon surrounded by the thickesses of the forest. Longbeard and Jordan forgot their sorrows—and their hopes and their fears together, and were alive only to the present, as they heard the merry laughter of Bamme and the artisans who accompanied him. Their liberation from the smoky city—the excitement of adventure—the charms of novelty—the beautiful scenery—and the invigorating air, all combined to raise their spirits; and they laughed and shouted like boys let loose from school. Some of them climbed the tall trees of the forest—some in reckless jollity, amused themselves by breaking down large branches with a blow of the oaken cudgels with which they had provided themselves—some took delight in finding out obstructions, and jumping over them, clearing standing pools at a bound, and hopping over dykes, ditches, and hillocks, or the stumps of old trees, that had been cut down. Their cheerfulness was contagious, and Jordan had never been so gay since he had lost his daughters. Even the melancholy Longbeard smiled, and thought his brother might be a wiser man than himself, not to trouble his brain with thoughts of the liberty of the people, or the regeneration of the world; content with freedom for himself, and a life of independence in the woods, in daily converse with nature and her works, gaining health from her smile, and master of all the wealth a reasonable man could enjoy. His acts of occasional violence—the forced contributions he exacted from the Norman barons, which his enemies called robbery, Longbeard did not take into the account.

He was lost in this reverie, when he was suddenly aroused by a loud cry from Nicholas Bamme—"Hallo—ho—ho—ho!" said the stout Londoner, at the top of his powerful voice—"hallo—ho—ho—there's a glorious fellow—hallo—ho—ho!"—and as he spoke, a noble stag bounded across their path.

Half-a-dozen arrows were discharged at the animal in a moment, but they fell harmless; and the artisans set up a yell, as if they had been so many dogs, and bounded off in pursuit of the stag, which still coursed down the glade of the forest, in full view. The beast, as if he knew that his pursuers were but raw at the business, stopped for a moment in his career, and gazed at them with his full bright eyes, as if he were not at all afraid.

"Look at the magnificent rascal," said Bamme to his companions, "how he tosses his antlers at us in defiance. Hilloo—ho—hoh!"

The stag turned round, and was off again in the full pride of his fleetness, when an arrow from an unseen hand glanced from behind a tree and lodged in his neck. The animal sprang up, and bounding on a few paces further, stumbled forward upon the ground, dyeing the greensward with his blood. A man immediately came in sight, and drawing a knife from his leathern belt, buried it in the throat of the stag, which turned up its eyes piteously upon its destroyer and expired. Half-a-dozen other men also made their appearance, the prevailing colours of whose habiliments were black and green. Longbeard knew them instantly, and the rest soon divined.

The bowman, whose arrow had proved so effectual, having seen the work was done, looked up at the boisterous intruders into the forest. Recognising Longbeard at a glance, he advanced a few steps towards him, and the next instant shook him cordially by the hand.

"Ah! brother Bryan," said Longbeard, "I thought you could not be far off, when so glorious a pair of antlers were turning their tips to the clouds. Your shaft was bravely sped."

"'Twas a fine beast!" said Bryan. "Take care of him, my merry men," he continued, turning to the others in the same costume as himself, "and so arrange him that his haunches may smoke on our board to-morrow. And now, brother,, let me welcome you and all your company to the woods where you have been long expected. Friend Jordan, give me your hand—forget that I won the love of your daughter without your permission, and whatever the result of that matter may be, we have sworn to be friends, you know. Were you ever in the woods?" he added, as the tanner returned his salute; "why, man, the smell of the trees, and the flowers, and the fresh country air, must be worth a mark a minute to one newly come from a tanyard. You shall see our mode of life for to-day, and to-morrow we will set to work. You are welcome, all of you," he continued, turning to Bamme and the rest, "stalwart fellows you are, considering you were bred in a town; you have voices, too, that make the woods ring. We will have a drinking-bout in honour of your arrival, and Kent shall drink waes-hael to London!"

"And London will return the greeting, or I am no true man," replied Bamme.

"Well said, friend—what's your name?"

"Nicholas Bamme, armourer, at your command."

"And these?"

"These—why some of them are armourers," replied Bamme. "The strongest and best-looking of them are of that noble

calling;—then there are two or three tanners, two or three fletchers and bowyers, and one a skinner—all true men, every Jack of them.”

“Hark ye, fellows,” said Bryan, who was fast becoming popular with them—“can you drink?”

“Ay—ay—ay,” shouted one and all.

“Can you sing?”

“Ask them that when you have tried them with the first,” said Bamme, whilst the laughter of the men testified that they approved his answer.

“Can you fight?”

“Hurra! hurra!” was the answer to this question, while caps were waved in the air in triumph.

“I see you are stanch,” said Bryan; “now follow me.”

Bryan, Longbeard, and Jordan took the lead, and Bamme and the rest came on behind, with the remaining foresters. Leaving the glade of the wild wood where this scene had occurred, they struck down to the right by a bye-path, over-spread with brambles and brushwood, through which Bryan and his men made their way with perfect ease, but which sorely incommoded Longbeard and the Londoners. Jordan groaned in spirit as the thorns occasionally pierced through his leggins to his flesh, but he breathed not a word of complaint. Not so Bamme and his bowyers, armourers, and skinners. They made some remonstrances, but were met with laughter; and their guides took a malicious pleasure in leading them through places where the thorns grew as high as a man, and where there was considerable danger to the uninitiated, of disfigured cheeks and scratched eyes.

“I tell you what,” said Bamme to a stalwart forester, who was no other than our old friend Tom-o’-the-Yew, “I like the woods very well for a change, but you might improve them vastly by making a path through them. Give me London streets, where a man may walk with a whole jerkin.”

“Never was in a town in my life,” said Tom-o’-the-Yew, “and if I keep my senses, I never will. No—give me the trees and the brushwood, and the fine beasts that dwell under them.”

“Ha! ha! ha!—well, I never thought I should see a man who would own himself a beast—ha! ha!” said Bamme, laughing loudly; “we in London call ourselves free citizens.”

“Citizens—faugh!” said Tom-o’-the-Yew. “Call yourselves ‘free men!’ but citizens—what does that mean? Why, that you dwell in dingy huts—breathe smoke instead of fresh air—and live amid continual foul smells. At least I have heard so; but sorry should I be to convince myself by going to see. Faugh! I hate the name of a city.”

"Well, well," said Bamme, giving up the argument, "men get hold of prejudices, and never get rid of them. But, as I said before, why, in the name of Satan, could not some of you give a little of your spare time to make a decent pathway through these brambles? Confound them—my eye is nearly torn out by a thorn," and Bamme lifted his cudgel and struck down an offending branch as he spoke.

"We would not clear a pathway in the forests for the world," said Tom-o'-the-Yew. "Do you think we are fools, and that we have no reason for what we do, and for what we leave undone?"

"Well, there may be a reason in it, but it's confoundedly difficult to see. However, we will talk it over after dinner. I suppose you dine in the forests here? I heard something just now of a haunch of venison, and was asked if I could drink. I'll convince you, if you'll give me leave, that we Londoners can both eat and drink."

This conversation, with much more to the same purport, was taking place in the rear, while Longbeard, Jordan, and Bryan were discussing more important matters in the front. One of the first questions of the worthy tanner to Bryan, was to inquire whether anything had been heard of his friend Robert de Robaulx.

"Not yet," replied Bryan, with a significant wink. "We shall see him ere night, most probably. There is a pretty maiden who dwells by the river's brink, not far from Gravesend, and I would wager my life against an untanned hide that he has turned aside thither, and stayed for an hour or two to gain an encouraging look from her bright eyes."

"I can never believe it," said the tanner.

"If it be not as I say, may I turn a grindstone in a dungeon for the remainder of my life. You shall hear for yourself."

"You must be jesting. Is he not betrothed to my daughter? Have I not settled the matter these five years past?"

"I tell you, friend Jordan, that your daughter will never have him; but more than that, he would not have your daughter if she would have him. Why, he is head over ears in love with another. But we will arrange all these things; and though you make a wry face at present, you—even you—shall consent, not only that this darling of yours shall wed his new love, but that his old love shall wed me."

"I'll be hanged if I do!" said Jordan.

"We will discuss that after we have restored her to her father," said Longbeard; "and I know his heart too well, to doubt that he will act as a father should, who loves his child

more than his own will. But, alas! while we are thus giving away hearts, and deciding who shall marry and who shall not marry, where are those whom we seek?"

"I have been myself to Willenden," replied Bryan, "since our laggard friend De Robaulx set out to London, and have seen my trusty old minstrel, John-o'-the-Dingle. There is no doubt that the girls are there, and unharmed, as yet; but I fear me no argument but that of force will make Le Boutelier do justice, and set them free."

"You said they were well and unharmed—God be praised, then!" exclaimed the tanner; "we will have them out, if we pull his house down."

"I have sworn it," replied Bryan, "and shall take the opportunity to pay off some long-standing debts that I owe Sir William Le Boutelier. I will wipe off old scores. I only hope that I may have to let loose my merry-men upon him—and yours too. I doubt not these fellows can fight well?"

"I fear me but too well," said Longbeard; "and it is my earnest desire to commit no violence. The king, who overtook our boat as we were sailing down the Thames, knows our wrong, and will be our friend against Le Boutelier; but he has commanded us not to take the law into our own hands. There are ten thousand reasons why I should obey."

Bryan had heard rumours of the king's return, and that he had passed from Sandwich through Kent, on his road to London; but this was the first confirmation of the news which had reached him. "Not rescue them by force of arms!" exclaimed he in surprise—"and why are you here? Why have I been expecting you?" Do you wish to see them the prey of this man?"

"God forbid!" said Longbeard, fervently. "I have vowed to save them, and I will. But why should we not use fair means first? why should we not—numerous as we shall be—ask him to restore them, and see whether he dare refuse? I'm sick of the shedding of blood; I'm weary of outrage, with which the land is full. In a cause like this, the best justice will be done, if we have it done peaceably. Brother Bryan, the king longs for an opportunity of showing to all his people that he can punish an offender, however high his station; that he can cast down a Norman oppressor for wronging a poor Saxon; and where could he have such an opportunity as this? If we take revenge upon this man, how shall the king do justice? How shall the pride of such tyrants as this be humbled all over the land, if we humble this one in secret and by our own means?"

"Brother," replied Bryan, "stay in the woods till we return; leave the matter with us, or I fear we shall do no good

at all. You mistake the character of William Le Boutelier. What, man! would you speak fair and softly with a wolf, when he had a kid in his mouth? would you be civil to a hawk when he had fixed his talons into a dove?"

"Brother, you are rash," replied Longbeard. "I have vowed before heaven not to leave this place until Friedolinda and Marian Jordan are restored to the arms of their father; but having the right on my side so far, I will not place myself in the wrong by commencing violence. Do not injure a good cause. Let us try legal means first."

"First if you will," said Bryan, "but if they fail? Shall we quietly, like dogs who are afraid, turn tail, skulk off, and leave him?—my blood boils when I think of it."

"If these means fail—if he refuse to give them up—then you shall be the leader of the enterprise. I shall have done my best to avoid violence—and on the head of the guilty shall lay the odium of spilling blood—on him and on his house let it lie for ever."

"Amen to that," said Bryan; "what say you, Jordan?"

"Let us avoid violence if we can—all I want is my children—if I cannot recover them but by force—upon the head of the spoiler be it—our hands are clean."

As they thus conversed, they arrived within sight of the little dell in the forest, where De Robaulx was first conducted to Bryan Fitzosbert. As before, a fire was burning brightly in the midst, and a kid was roasting whole for the dinner of the foresters. The Londoners were not sorry to see such a sight, and the satisfaction of Bamme was most distinctly visible in his eyes. The skinner, and the armourers, and the tanners, in his train, speedily made the acquaintance of the woodsmen, and a good understanding was established between them. The repast finished—various sports were instituted under the joint superintendence of Tom-o'-the-Yew and Nicholas Bamme, and the time passed merrily on until evening. Bryan, Longbeard, and Jordan, retired to discourse upon their plans to the house of the former—a mere hut to all outward appearance, but most comfortable and substantial within—like a baronial hall, hung round with implements of war, and trophies of the chase. Ere nightfall, as predicted by Bryan, De Robaulx made his appearance, and gave but a faint denial to the question of the forester, that he had taken Greenhithe in his way, and exchanged a glance with one Roger Tyke, who had a fair daughter, named Phebe. Longbeard saw how matters stood, and was assured that his brother need fear no rival in that quarter, for the hand of the pretty Marian. The father postponed all inquiry upon the

subject, until a fitter opportunity, when they could be more alone, and they were all in a short time in deep consultation upon the measures to be adopted.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Shameful it is—aye, if the fact be known—
 Hateful it is—there is no hate in loving—
 I'll beg her love—but she is not her own—
 The worst is but denial and reproving—
 My will is strong—past reason's weak removing ;

* * * * * *

Then childish fear avaunt—debating die—
 My heart shall never countermand mine eye ;
 Sad pause—and deep regard besem the sage,
 My part is youth, and beats these from the stage ;
 Desire my pilot is—beauty my prize."

SHAKSPEARE.

It is now time that we should return to our fair captives, and relate the adventures that befel them, while their lovers and friends were thus plotting for their deliverance. It is time, also, that we should see how matters went with our old friend, the gleeman, who had so unceremoniously thrust himself into the jaws of danger, and detail by what means he procured access to the sweet sisters, and poured the balm of hope and comfort to their souls.

Inured to adventure of all kinds, and perfectly heedless of the future, the old gleeman slept as well on the first night of his admission to Willenden Castle, as if he had not excited the suspicions, and placed himself in the power of a jealous and revengeful man. Nought cared he for the morrow; and when it dawned, after his refreshing slumbers, it was equally without surprise and without apprehension of any kind, that he was ushered into the presence of Sir William Le Boutelier, Sir Robert de Gony, Almeric Talybois, and Roger de Tronsebours. The whole four of them cast frowning looks upon him as he entered, which he saw, but pretended not to see, and in a cheerful voice he bade them each good morrow.

"I'll try him again," said Le Boutelier to his cousin, "and find if there's harm in him."

"Let me try him," said Roger de Tronsebours; "I'll frighten the truth out of him. Harkye, friend minstrel," he added, casting a black scowl upon the gleeman, "when I was in Holy Land fighting against the infidels, a spy came into our camp."

"Very likely," returned the gleeman, "such things often happen in war."

"Yes, and in peace too, sometimes," said De Tronsebours; "and what dost thou think we did with him?"

"I faith I don't know; put his eyes out, perhaps."

"Thou hast guessed it; but that was not all," added he, marching up to the minstrel and staring him full in the face, "we cut his nose off, sir—and we cut his ears off, sir! and—"

"Poor devil!" said the minstrel, interrupting, "but it served him right! fair treatment, by all the practices of war."

"Yes, sir minstrel; and what was more, we had a gallows forty feet high, and there we hung him, for the crows and vultures to peck at."

"Quite right," said the minstrel; "but why do you open your mouth so wide, and so close to my face? Zounds! your teeth are not so handsome, or your breath so fragrant, as to make such close quarters agreeable. Faugh!—tell your story at a greater distance."

"Well said, minstrel," interposed Almeric Talybois, laughing at the discomfiture of his friend, who seemed far from pleased with the rebuff: "it's a vile trick he has, and ought not to be tolerated; and I can't conceive what he means, by telling us his prosy stories about spies in the Holy Land. What are spies to us, or to you?"

"Egad, I don't know," said the minstrel; "I wish I could spy breakfast, or any signs of it—for it is time that I should be moving, and away."

"Thou dost not leave this roof for a month to come; we have not done with thee yet," said Le Boutelier.

"How shall I be grateful enough for your kindness?" inquired the old man. "I did not like to ask if I might make a longer stay, and so be self-invited. A month, did you say? I could remain well pleased in this hospitable house for ever."

"Well, then," said Le Boutelier, "thou shalt remain at all events, till we know thee better. We have open hearts here, for our friends—but for foes or traitors, we have deep dungeons, a sharp rack, and a high gallows. And so for the present, sir minstrel, thou mayest go to thy breakfast."

"I thank you—you are a worthy host—generous and high-spirited, and should opportunity ever arise, you will find me grateful. I, too, have been in Holy Land," he added, turning to Roger de Tronsebours, "and I, too, have not travelled in vain. There is learning in the east, thou knowest—I need not inform thee of that."

"Oh, no—spare thyself the trouble," said Roger.

"I made the acquaintance of a great magi and a fire

worshipper, when I was in Jerusalem, and he unfolded all his secrets to me. Seven years I lived with him in a cave, fed upon herbs and waters, and gathered simples upon the Holy Hills by the light of the moon. But I'll tell you all about it, after breakfast; I know some things that are worth knowing. Didst ever hear of Doctor Abra Ben Acadabra?"

"What, the conjuror?" inquired De Gonys.

"Pish!" said the old man, with a look of contempt, "he is no conjuror; but he has some skill as a leech, and can charm away the toothache and the rheumatism, and compound a medicine which will preserve a man strong and vigorous till his years number a hundred."

"So some people say—and what then?"

"What then? why, I taught him all his knowledge; for one cure that he can work, I can work fifty—and his elixir of life and love is weak and valueless compared to mine. But we shall have plenty of time to talk of these matters, if I stay here a month; and a month I will stay, for I like your company! Where did you say the breakfast was prepared?"

"Show him, De Gonys," said Le Boutelier to his obliging cousin with the red nose; "show him, and remain with him and do the honours."

De Gonys withdrew with the old gleeman, as desired, and Le Boutelier was left alone with Talybois and De Tronsebours. They finally decided, after some discussion, that they should watch the gleeman narrowly, but in the meantime take no further open notice of the suspicions which his ballad had excited. In a short time the gleeman returned from his repast, and Le Boutelier withdrew to make his morning toilet, Almeric to play at the quintain in the court of the castle, while Roger de Tronsebours alone remained with the old man. The skill which the latter had vaunted the possession of had excited the curiosity of Roger, and he determined to make friends with a man who had so much learning, which might be useful to him in an affair that lay near his heart. The wily gleeman saw that he had touched a right chord, but abstained from recommencing the subject, leaving that to his companion, who, he felt convinced, from certain preliminary hints that he let drop, would soon plunge into it.

"Thou and I shall be better acquainted," said Roger, stretching his limbs on a large couch by the side of the window, that commanded a beautiful view over the waters of the Medway and the rich country on its banks, while the gleeman coolly sat down on the end of the table. "To have been in Holy Land is quite enough for me. A man who has fought there becomes my brother; thou didst hear of me there. I suppose?" he added, looking complacently as he spoke.

"Many's the time and oft!" said the gleeman. "Among heroes of a former age, I heard the names of Godfrey de Bouillon and Tancred; among the heroes of the present age, Cœur-de-Lion and De Tronsebours."

The knight looked serious, but not displeased at the gross flattery. "Tell me, oh gleeman!" he said, after an interval of thought, "thou hast had some experience among woman-kind. What pleases them most?"—

"Oh! bravery, undoubtedly," said the gleeman.

"And next to that?"—

"It's hard to say, whether a handsome person or a glib tongue;—if a man can combine both, it is all the better."

"Well, and is it not marvellous, sir minstrel,—is it not unaccountable, that a man may not only be very brave, tolerably good-looking, and preach of love with as much unction as a monk, and yet make no impression?"

"Very unaccountable to most people," said the minstrel.

"It is your case doubtless, by the melancholy look you put on."

"Hush!" said Tronsebours, "don't talk so loud, lest that confounded braggart and vain puppy, Almeric Talybois, should overhear us; and tell me in confidence, whether there is no means known to the wise men of the East, whereby a coy maiden may be brought to love a true man."

"What?" said the gleeman, as if it were a thing of course, "thou art in love with the bright-eyed, cherry-cheeked, fair-haired maiden—eh?—and she looks coolly upon thee, does she?—well, there is a remedy."

De Tronsebours arose—went softly to the door, and fastened it,—shut down the window—looked up the very chimney, lest somebody should be hiding there, and then walked up on tip-toe to the minstrel.—"Thou knowest what we thought unknown, however thou didst get thy knowledge—and thou hast somehow or other got my secret;—tell me—or I run this sword into thy paunch—how didst thou learn it?"

"Run thy sword into my paunch!" said the minstrel, rising, and seizing hold of Tronsebours, whose arms he pinioned to his side in an instant,—“why, man, if thou wert to threaten me, I would squeeze thy soul out in a moment—get thee gone!” he added, releasing him, “and know thy friends from thy foes a little better.”

"I crave thy pardon," said Tronsebours, putting up his sword, and rubbing his arm, which was sore with the grip he had received. "Egad, thou'rt strong for an old man;—but no one knows whom to trust now-a-days."

"A man of thy penetration ought to discover immediately," said the gleeman, again sitting down on the edge of the table; "but I bear no malice. And so the pretty Marian pouts, does

she? and will not look on thee? But canst thou wonder at it?—thy mode of courtship was none of the softest, even supposing thou didst not leave a rival behind thee, or bring one with thee.”

“Rivals behind, I do not fear,” said Tronsebours,—“but a rival here is the devil and damnation;” and so saying, De Tronsebours arose, and strutted twice or thrice across the room.

The gleeman said nothing, but went to the window, and looked out admiringly upon the landscape. After a minute or two, Tronsebours stood beside him—“Art thou indeed a learned leech, as well as a minstrel,” said he; “thou didst mention something just now of a wondrous elixir—will money buy it?”

“No, not alone,” said the gleeman; “the great elixir of life is not to be bought only—but to be given—and only to those who are worthy.”

“I care not for your elixirs of life,” said De Tronsebours; “I don’t believe there is any virtue in them—I want an elixir of love!—dost *thou* understand me?”

“Quite well,” replied the gleeman; “but such an elixir is not made in a day—I have compounded some few in my time, which have melted cold hearts, and repaid unregarded passion for all its torments—but it requires time—late watching—favourable skies—and a sight of the coy one to whom it is to be given. The philter that might make a fair maid kind, might render a dark one cruel—and the blue eye does not brighten with the same fires as the hazel. But it will cost thee dear, friend De Tronsebours.”

“I care not, should it cost me even to my spurs.”

“Hast thou fifty marks to begin with?”

“Fifty what?” said Tronsebours—“fifty marks? I never had half such a sum in my life. Here is my fortune!” he said, drawing his sword—“that has been my provider, and has found money, when I wanted it—but fifty marks!—thou mightest as well have asked me to pay the ransom of King Richard.”

“Hast thou twenty?” said the gleeman.

“No! nor ten—nor five—but I think I could borrow five.”

“Thou shalt borrow me five then, and owe me the rest,” said the gleeman; “and to-night, by the moonbeam, thou and I shall begin.”

“It’s well—we will speak further of this—but not now, for I hear Sir William Le Boutelier approaching.”

De Tronsebours hastened to undo the door, which he had fastened—and the next instant Le Boutelier entered the

room—his hair was neatly trimmed—his attire was of the richest of the period, and his sword-hilt of gold glittered by his side.

"Hast thou fought all thy battles in the Holy Land over again, since I left you?" said he, with a soft voice and a pretty smile, as he stroked his chin, and cast a condescending look at Tronsebours. "I intend a feat of arms ere dinner, in the court, and thou shalt show thy prowess, and in ladies' eyes too. Go and give orders that all be got ready; tell De Gony's and Talybois, and a score of men, to prepare the lists, that we may make pastime; and such bright eyes will look upon us, as have not graced this castle since my mother was a bride."

"With all my heart," said Tronsebours, casting a meaning glance at the gleeman, which the latter interpreted as a caution that he should divulge nothing to Le Boutelier about the promised philter, and took his departure.

"Tell me now truly," said Le Boutelier, as soon as the minstrel and himself were alone, "how didst thou learn that there are now two fair maidens in Willenden?"

"To tell thee truly, then," replied John-o'-the-Dingle, "it was no secret, Sir William Le Boutelier. It is the common talk of people in London. A man must be deaf and blind indeed, to have come thence without knowing that thou hadst carried away the two sisters—the sweetest wenches in Christendom."

"How could it have been known?" said Le Boutelier to himself; "there was not a soul stirring."

"There was one Doctor Abra Ben Acadabra, who swears he saw the whole affair, and who knows thee well."

"Curse Doctor Abra Ben Acadabra!" said the knight, with much emphasis, "and now tell me this—thou art in my power, and if thou deceivest me I will have thee hanged, as true as thou standest there a living man. Art thou willing to be my friend?"

"No," replied the minstrel; "how can I be a friend to a man who talks big, and bullies me, and prates about hanging? Pooh! hang me, if you dare! But notwithstanding this, if you were to speak me fairly, and not mistrust me, I would, at all events, not be your foe. Do you think you gain friendship by threats? Know the world better, Sir William Le Boutelier, and learn that neither friendship nor love is to be gained by hard words and hard usage."

Le Boutelier bit his lips. "Well," said he, more frankly, "and so thy ballad, as I suspected, was made upon us?"

"It was sung as a warning," replied the minstrel; "do you think William Fitzosbert is a man to endure the loss of

one whom he values more than his life? Do you think your neighbour, Brownbuskin—you know whom I mean—will submit to it? Beware! they are up and stirring.”

“I thank thee for thy caution, but it was not needed. Willenden is strong, and I have trusty fellows—hundreds of them, who would shed their last blood for me.”

“Is the game worth the risk?” said the minstrel.

“Worth it?” said Le Boutelier, his pale face lighting up into enthusiasm, and his eyes flashing fire. “Worth it? The love of Friedolinda Jordan would be worth a world!”

“Have you tried to gain her love?”

“Tried!” said Le Boutelier. “I have flattered—I have beseeched—I have vowed—I have protested—I have knelt—ay, even wept to her! but all in vain. My patience is exhausted, and I shall try other means now—and they shall be sure ones.”

“Then you love her not?”

“I adore her!” exclaimed Le Boutelier.

“Then how can your patience be exhausted? Patience dwells with love.”

“It is well for thee to speak—thou art old and cold, and canst not understand what I feel; every hour that separates me from her is an age of torment.”

“Oh, pooh—pooh—pooh!” exclaimed the gleeman. “You shall try a philter—one that was never known to fail, that shall turn her coldness into warmth—her revilings into endearments—her hate into love. I will prepare one to-night for you, which you shall administer, and on the third day, if you can wait so long; all uncertainty will be at an end. You shall see the charm work—you shall see her eyes sparkle—hear her tongue form soft speeches, and her lips and arms shall learn how to caress. But you must wait.”

“I have heard of such things,” said Le Boutelier. “but I have no faith in them; there is magic in them, and I would not owe the possession of Friedolinda to the aid of the devil. No, I will try what my own tongue can do, and if that fails—why, it fails—but Friedolinda shall nevertheless be mine.” Le Boutelier paused, as if he had said too much, and then, changing the subject, said, “Wilt see the sports? The lists are prepared. Go; I’ll follow.”

The gleeman did as he was desired, and Le Boutelier, lingering behind for a moment, called a page. “Come hither, boy,” he said, “thou seest yon burly singing man—I am not quite satisfied of his intentions here; he is to appear free, but to be a prisoner—dost thou understand?”

The boy nodded.

“Watch him cautiously; I entrust him to thee, and if,

upon any pretext whatever, he should seek to pass the threshold of this castle, let me know instantly. Dost understand that?"

"Perfectly well," said the boy.

"But let him not suspect that he is observed; and if thou dost this well, I will reward thee;" and so saying, Le Boutelier turned on his heel, and followed the minstrel to the court yard of the castle.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"We'd rather live in deserts,
Beneath the greenwood tree,
Than here, base knight, among thy grooms,
The sport of them and thee."

The Boy and the Mantle: PERCY'S Relics.

FRIEDOLINDA and Marian, induced by the repeated invitations of Le Boutelier, had consented to appear on the leads of the tower of Willenden, to witness the martial sports of its inhabitants. Le Boutelier had thrown off the mask completely; he affected no further concealment, and every member of his household had, for the first time, a view of the fair maidens, whose presence among them had excited so much of their interest and curiosity. All eyes were turned towards them as they appeared, and Le Boutelier, De Gonys, Talybois, and Tronsebours, having made their most respectful obeisances, the sports commenced. Le Boutelier rode a fine grey steed, the graceful action of which, its magnificent accoutrements, and the rich attire of the rider, he fondly thought would win him a look of admiration from Friedolinda. But he knew her not; his gallant bearing did not even attract her eye; she looked vacantly upon the scene—her mind was not upon it, but far away in her own deserted house upon the bridge—at the cheerless hearth of her father—or at the lonely side of William Fitzosbert. Marian was more interested, and as the knights rode against each other, their lances and armour gleaming, their steeds prancing, and the varied colours of their accoutrements, and the banners and dress of their riders glancing in the sunshine, she thought it was a gallant sight, and forgot her sorrows for a moment—forgot that she was a prisoner, and that her captor was a violent, passionate, and unscrupulous man.

When the sports had concluded, Le Boutelier ascended to the tower, where the maidens still sat. Roger de Tronsebours, who, at every interval in the assaults of the horsemen, had been observed to converse with the old gleeman, ascended

also, unobserved by Le Boutelier, who thought himself alone. Friedolinda and Marian were descending into the apartment provided for them, when they were met in the corridor by the two knights. Le Boutelier frowned as he caught sight of De Tronsebours, but the latter returned frown for frown, and entered with him into the room of the maidens. Friedolinda was not displeased to see that her persecutor was accompanied by another person, although she recognised that other as one of the men who had carried her forcibly from London. Any companion was better to her than the sole presence of Sir William Le Boutelier.

Le Boutelier took De Tronsebours aside for a moment. "Why do you follow me?" he asked; "I would be alone."

"Be alone with the one, if you like," replied De Tronsebours, "only let me be alone with the other."

"I tell you, no," said Le Boutelier, whispering between his teeth, and half-unsheathing his sword.

"You cannot frighten me," rejoined De Tronsebours. "What! did I not bargain for one?"

"Hush! you hound!" exclaimed Le Boutelier: "do you speak of them as if they were cattle?"

The latter words were uttered in so low a whisper, that not a syllable was heard by the young women.

"I will not be cheated," replied De Tronsebours; "the fair girl is mine; and if you dispute my right, thank God! I have fought with the Saracens, and am not afraid of any knight in England."

"Fool and beast!" said Le Boutelier, drawing him into a corner, as if he wanted to speak to him on urgent and secret business; "you shall repent of this. I tell you this is not the time to urge your suit."

"As much my time as yours," returned the other, doggedly; "and I tell you I will speak with the younger girl now, if I have to pass my sword through your body first."

The sisters were clasped in each other's arms as the Normans spoke, and no longer strove to listen to a discourse which had become quite inaudible. Friedolinda drew a dagger from her bosom, and showed it to her sister. Marian shuddered, and her blood ran cold. "Spare us from this crime, oh God," said the elder—"spare us, and pity us."

The two knights at this instant walked carelessly towards them, as if their dispute had blown over; and Le Boutelier composed his handsome face into its blandest expression, while the grisly De Tronsebours endeavoured to look amiable. "Fair ladies," said the former, "you wrong the surpassing loveliness that Heaven has given you, by allowing the shadow of grief to dwell upon your faces. Will you not be comforted?"

"Is there any comfort in thralldom?" said Friedolinda. "Oh! sir, why will you mock us?"

"Fairest Friedolinda," replied Le Boutelier, "you do me wrong: you are the goddess of my soul, and I pine to do you service; all that I have is at your command;—you shall be lady of Willenden, and you shall have five hundred men to obey your behests; you shall grace the court of a king, if you will but love me."

"Hear me!" she replied; "I would rather share the crust of the squalidest beggar in broad England;—nay, I would rather die, than consent to look with favour upon so base a man as thou art."

"Thy very violence gives me hope," exclaimed Le Boutelier, looking upon her with an intensity of admiration which she had never before noticed in him; "you will yet be mine, I know you will."

"Never!" said Friedolinda, emphatically, turning from him—"never!"

"Then by the heaven that sees me I swear you shall!" said Le Boutelier, losing his temper, and then suddenly recollecting himself, he added, in a milder tone and with his most winning smile—"forgive my vehemence, sweetest Friedolinda! Why will nature form such beauty and only half do her work, and not make it kind! I do not rave and spout, and say that I will die for your love. Oh, no! I will live for it. I will sue for it day after day; and surely you will have pity upon me at last. Your hunchback lover has forsaken you, Friedolinda, and will never see you again. Look, I am straight."

"Ay, in your back," said Friedolinda; "but in your heart?"

"Could you see it," replied Le Boutelier, "you would find it filled with all that is good and beautiful: it is filled with your image."

"I am proof against flattery as against violence," said Friedolinda.

"You are but a woman," replied Le Boutelier; "a little of either goes a great way with your sex. I would gain your love without either; to flatter perfection like yours is impossible; to use more violence than I have used already, would be unpardonable, even in my own eyes, unless you should compel me, by making me suffer those pangs which no human virtue could endure without a struggle. Recollect we are all but weak."

"I am strong enough to die," said Friedolinda.

"You shall not die, Friedolinda: the world cannot spare such beauty; you shall live to be happy, and make me happy."

I will come and sup with you to-night, if you will permit me."

"I cannot prevent you; you are master in your own house; but I would as soon sup with Lucifer."

"Fie upon you! to twist your beautiful tongue into the utterance of such harsh words! But we will sup together, nevertheless; there shall be wine and dance and song—music shall soften your hard heart, Friedolinda—and you shall smile, and look indeed the queen of beauty and of love that you are."

"Oh, why will you mock me?" she exclaimed, clasping her hands together, while the tears gathered in her eyes; "why will you, who are so strong, persecute me, who am so weak? Be generous, Sir William Le Boutelier, and do not seek for a love which never can be yours. Be master of yourself, and have pity upon us."

"No, Friedolinda," said the knight, fervently, for he thought that never had she appeared so lovely as at that moment, when her eyes, sparkling amid her tears, were even more eloquent than her tongue. "I could not renounce my hope, were the dominion of the world to be my reward."

Friedolinda made no answer, but hiding her face in her hands for a moment, prayed inwardly for help and consolation; while Le Boutelier still looked on with kindling eyes, and an admiration that increased every moment. He did not notice, neither did Friedolinda, that Roger de Tronsebours had succeeded in drawing Marian to a distant corner of the apartment, and neither of them heard the colloquy that took place.

"Pretty Marian," said De Tronsebours; "fairer than the Peris of the East—I love thee truly—I am but a poor knight, but I have a sword which shall win thee wealth. Look," he said, drawing it an inch or two from its scabbard, "and tell me where thou hast an enemy, and I will run him through."

"Then run thyself through," said Marian, "for thou art the greatest enemy I have got."

"Would it please thee, if I did?" asked De Tronsebours.

"I should be delighted," said Marian, and a smile twinkled in her eyes, in spite of her alarm, as she noticed the rueful and puzzled countenance of her admirer.

"Oh, thou wicked and too-bewitching creature!" replied De Tronsebours; "but if it must be done, thou shalt do it, and rid the world of a true knight and thy true lover."

"Of a base knight, and a disgrace to the name of lover!" said Marian.

De Tronsebours bit his lip. He was not a man, like Le

Boutelier, who could admire a woman's anger, or take her sharp words in good part. "Thou pert minx!" he thought, within himself. "But I will tame thee yet, or my name is not De Tronsebours."

"Farewell, Marian," said he, taking her hand and squeezing it till he made her shriek; "I am a rough lover, but thou shalt find me a true one."

"Thou art a beast," said Marian, "but I tell thee this—if thou darest to touch me again, I will—"

"What?" inquired De Tronsebours, seeing that she paused.

"Oh, I know not—I know not—but if thou dost me harm, there is a man in the forests of Kent who knows how to take revenge."

"Pooh! I scorn his revenge, fair Marian; thou art mine, and mine only. But fare thee well, we will discourse more together ere night; and the god of love make thee kinder."

The pretty lip of Marian curled in ineffable scorn, and De Tronsebours, venturing no further observations, turned on his heel and left the room.

Le Boutelier lingered behind. "Wouldst thou be relieved, sweet Marian," said he, "from the importunity of that bear? I will silence him that he shall not trouble thee, for thy sister's sake."

"We are afraid of your offered kindness," replied Friedolinda, "lest it should hide a new deceit."

"Nay—you do me wrong; but you will know me better in time, and I forgive you. But, if you desire it, I will rid you of De Tronsebours. If you like his company, so—he shall remain. Farewell till supper. Then will ye both come?—and be kind, as ye ought to be, and smile?"

"We cannot refuse to come," said Friedolinda, taking her sister's hand—"we are, alas! your prisoners; but if you can force our presence, you cannot force us to rejoice with you. Be generous, and leave us alone to our sorrow."

"I shall expect you," said Le Boutelier; "I shall not be unkind to you, if you are unkind to yourselves. Farewell;" and with a graceful and respectful obeisance, Le Boutelier withdrew, and left his prisoners to themselves.

Marian relieved her heart by a flood of tears, which she wept on her sister's bosom; and those of Friedolinda, too long restrained, mingled with hers.

"I fear me, Marian," said the elder, "that this night will be the last I shall live. There is no safety for me but in death. Thou knowest I will die rather than be the victim of his evil passion. And thou too, my pretty child—my own Marian—whom I have fondled on my knee as if thou hadst been mine

infant, instead of my sister—my heart bleeds when I think of thee! O, that the God of the innocent would hear my prayers, and send us help in our great extremity! I saw from the looks of both these men that they meditated evil.”

“We must trust in God, my sister,” replied Marian, “and deceive them. Let us lure them with false hopes, and appear kind, if we are not so. Let us gain time, and help may reach us yet.”

“Thou art very sensible, Marian,” replied her sister, kissing her fondly; “and I never thought of that.”

“Let us not exasperate them any more by telling them the truth of what we think of them. I have been to blame, and have let my tongue outrun discretion.”

“They say ’tis a woman’s fault,” said Friedolinda. “We have been too sincere; but we will try other weapons, and conquer them by our guile.”

“See what that hateful braggart De Tronsebours dropped at my feet,” said Marian, showing her sister a little piece of parchment which she had picked up; “there is writing on it.”

Friedolinda read, among a profusion of cabalistic characters, of which she could make no meaning, the following words:—“COURAGE, PATIENCE, PRUDENCE. A RESCUE WILL ARRIVE. *De Tronsebours is both a knave and a fool, and knows not that he is the messenger of a friend. Beware of him, and wait and watch.*”

“I cannot understand whence this can come,” said Friedolinda, after she had read it over several times; “but the advice is good, come whence it will; and the hope is welcome, even though it should deceive us. We will join the supper of these knights, and our woman’s wit shall more than match their man’s brutality. What dost thou say, my sister?”

“They say women can deceive if they try,” replied Marian, “and we *will* try. We will be true to ourselves, let fate do its worst.”

“There spoke my good Marian. We will not let our anger lead us into danger; and the Virgin Mother will intercede for the innocent.” And the sisters were again comforted.

CHAPTER XXIV

"A feast was spread in the baron's hall,
And loud was the merry sound,
As minstrels played at lady's call,
And the cup went sparkling round.

"For gentle dames sat there I trow,
By men of mickle might."

JOANNA BAILLIE.

A SUMPTUOUS feast was ordered to be laid out that night in the great hall of Willenden Castle. Le Boutelier was arrayed in all the splendour of his gala costume, and impatient for the hour that was again to bring him into the presence of Friedolinda. It wanted but few minutes to the appointed time, when John-o'-the-Dingle beckoned De Tronsebours to a place where he thought they would be unobserved. De Tronsebours was also arrayed in a trim which he thought gallant; ~~the~~ most glaring colours mingled in his attire, and he wore a sword of more formidable dimensions than he could wield, while his rough red nose glowed with the unusual ablutions bestowed upon it in common with the rest of his face, and his small grey eyes twinkled with satisfaction. "Thou wilt take care that I am invited to make music, when the feast is over," said the gleeman; "I must look upon thy fair one, and study her features well, before I can prepare the elixir I told thee of."

"Thou shalt come," replied De Tronsebours; "but breathe not a word to Sir William Le Boutelier, or to Almeric Talybois. I would not like to be laughed at, if thy elixir failed."

"Oh, 'twill not fail," said the gleeman, shaking his head knowingly; and then giving De Tronsebours a nudge in the ribs which made the latter start again, he added, with a roguish leer, "how can it fail, when thou wilt aid it with that gallant sword and that smart doublet? Is there a female creature in the world, who could look upon thee in that trim, and not admire thee?"

De Tronsebours looked very grave, as he replied, "Well, but what necessity was there for giving me such a poke in the side? thou hast nearly taken my breath away."

"Well, thou shalt prosper, friend De Tronsebours; a three minutes' gaze at the maiden will suffice for me, and she shall be happy."

"I wish thou couldst make her happy," replied De Tronsebours; "it spoils the pleasure of love-making to be met with continual tears and groaning. Zounds! did I not know too well to the contrary, this wench's tears would have persuaded me that I was fruitful."

"I shall dry her tears, never fear me; but here comes Sir William Le Boutelier—how gallant he looks—almost as gallant as thou art; bent upon conquest, and upon making all hearts his own."

"Hush, not a word of the elixir," said De Tronsebours, with his finger to his nose, as the knight approached.

The gleeman nodded. Le Boutelier did not appear to observe them, and passed on. "He is meditating some scheme within himself," thought the gleeman; "he is thinking, for once in his life, and no doubt of mischief. I will watch him well, and circumvent him yet, or may I hang like a scarecrow, and every jackanapes have a shot at me."

"What was that?" said De Tronsebours, rather sharply.

"That the god of love has shot his dart at him," replied the gleeman; "poor man! it must be a terrible thing to be in love."

"Didst thou never try it, then?" inquired De Tronsebours.

"Yes, with smoking venison and fat ale; but with woman, never—and I never shall."

"Thou old heathen! I can't believe it; but hush, here is Le Boutelier again," and as he spoke, the knight once more entered the room, and walked straight towards them.

"I shall want thee to-night, sir minstrel," said he, standing right in front of the old man, and looking him fixedly in the face, "to put thine art to the trial. It can, it is said, excite men to deeds of warfare; can it melt women into tenderness?"

"My harp has lost its spirit, and my hand its cunning to awake its strings, if it fail to do either the one or the other," replied the minstrel. "In the knight's hall, or the lady's bower, or under the forester's canopy of oaken leaves, its skill has been recognised many a year, and it would be hard, indeed, if the gift had departed from me since yesterday."

"And hark you, then, sir minstrel," said Le Boutelier, "if you wish your neck to remain without a rope around it, you will not repeat the foolish ballad you sang yesternight."

"About the Paynim's daughter?" said the old man, with apparent unconcern.

"Curse the Paynim's daughter!—No," replied Le Boutelier; "I mean the other."

"Oh," said the minstrel, smiling, to see how Tronsebours bit his lips at the mention of his love-story, "about Brown-buskin—he's a terrible dog that—ardent in love, and fierce in war, and the most dangerous foe a man can have now-a-days, especially in the county of Kent; but I'll not speak of him—he's nothing to me or to you, you know."

"Beware, then!" said Le Boutelier, and with these significant words they parted—De Tronsebours and the gleeman to

resume their discourse, and the Lord of Willenden to give the finishing touch to his glossy hair, and the final adjustment to the gallant attire which he thought was to make that night a favourable impression on the hitherto hard heart of Friedolinda Jordan.

And not for himself alone were the treasures of his wardrobe. The old castle had been ransacked of its jewels, and its velvets and cloth of gold, which had formerly adorned, perchance, the departed ladies of Willenden, and they were taken, by Le Boutelier's directions, to the chamber of his captives, that they might make choice of whatever suited them. They were but scantily provided with raiment, and jewels they had never worn; and Friedolinda, when the costly articles were spread out before her, decided to reject them, and send them back, with her formal thanks, to the giver. But Marian thought otherwise; the sparkle of the gems delighted her eyes—and heart too—and had the giver been ten times more odious to her than William Le Boutelier, she would have found it a hard matter to resist the temptation of wearing them, or, at least, of trying them on, to see how she would look in them.

“What a lovely necklace!” she exclaimed, with admiration. “Friedolinda, this shall be thine—there—thou lookest like a queen of beauty,” she added, as she put it round her sister's neck; “I never saw thee so lovely—thou throwest all my charms into the shade; but never mind, I am not jealous, thou knowest; and see, here is another, and of diamonds, too,” and, as she spoke, she placed the glittering gems around her own white neck, and Friedolinda was compelled to own that she looked very beautiful in them.

“Solemn sister mine, I have a plan in my head,” said she; “we will load ourselves with the jewels of this false-hearted knight, and try to escape with them. What a jest it would be in the wild woods if we could rob the robber and spoil the spoiler—would it not, Friedolinda?”

“It would be no jest to me, Marian; but thy light heart and thy ready wit will, I think, after all, do us more service than my sorrow and anger. We must amuse these men for a time, though my heart loathes the deception; we must keep them in good humour with themselves while we can, and perchance the day of our deliverance may come.”

“Never fear,” replied Marian, kissing her affectionately; “the foolish girl shall aid the wise girl for once; and if my folly should turn to bad account, I will be as solemn and as demure as a monk all the days of my life. Dost thou think thy William Longbeard likely to give up the search for thee?”

"Never, while he has life!" replied Friedolinda, fervently. "Nor Bryan Fitzosbert, even if he were dead," said Marian; "his very ghost would walk to discover me, and be revenged upon this pert coxcomb, who has wronged both thee and me. But look!" she added, as she took a handsome bracelet from a casket; "here is another jewel, how it sparkles, like a star in a cold night; this shall be for thee."

Friedolinda allowed her sister to place the gem upon her arm, and, with some of woman's characteristic vanity, (it would be vain to assert that she was without her share, small though that share may have been,) she fancied that she should always like to wear them; and in a few moments the casket was rifled of its treasures, and the sisters shone with all the additional charms which wealth can bestow upon beauty. It is all very well for pastoral poets to sing of unadorned loveliness—of fair forms enswathed in coarse russet—but those who sing or write of beauty in this guise, would much rather see it in fine silks and velvets, and diamonds. That day the toilet of the sisters occupied more time than ever it had occupied before; and when they descended into the hall, where the repast awaited them, a buzz of admiration arose from Le Boutelier, De Gonys, Talybois, De Tronsebours, the old gleeman, and the score of squires and retainers who were permitted to be present at the lower table. Le Boutelier, whose eyes sparkled with delight, and who could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses, gazed upon Friedolinda with a passionate admiration, which was expressed upon every feature of his face, while Talybois and De Tronsebours strove who should first catch the glance of the beautiful Marian, more beautiful to their eyes than ever. But Marian did not even look at them; she had caught sight of another face fixed upon hers, with a look so full of meaning—so sorrowful, and yet so hopeful—that though the calm forsook her own cheeks at the recognition—though she trembled in all her limbs, and could scarcely walk to her seat, she felt comfort in her soul, and knew that a friend was near her. It was the old gleeman, whose features were familiar to her, whom she knew as the trusty friend of Bryan Fitzosbert; and who, she was sure, although she could not imagine how he got there, was there to do her service. The look they exchanged was unobserved, or at least not understood by any one, even by De Tronsebours; and Marian, with a smile, as if she were making some merry remark to her sister, whispered in her ear to take courage, for that a friend was in the room. Friedolinda blushed—"Don't look up," said her sister, "at least not now; but thou knowest the minstrel?"

It was some minutes ere Friedolinda found an opportunity to convince herself by a glance, that it was indeed he; but when she did so, her heart beat so violently, and such a glow suffused her cheeks and neck, that Le Boutelier, who at that moment was making her a compliment that she did not hear, imagined that she was flattered by it—and gazed upon her with such fervour of admiration, as put her again to the blush, and caused her to cast down her eyes in sweet confusion. Alas, for Friedolinda, that she was so lovely! alas, for Le Boutelier, that his passions were so ungovernable!

The repast concluded, De Tronsebours exchanged a knowing glance with the minstrel. “Now shall I melt this hard beauty,” said the one to himself;—“Now shalt thou prove thyself an ass,” thought the other. De Tronsebours, unobserved by any one, drew a little packet containing a white powder from his pocket, and held it concealed in his hand, awaiting an opportunity to infuse it into the cup of Marian, who suspected no evil. All rascals are not confiding, but De Tronsebours was; and the harmless powder which the old minstrel had artfully palmed off upon him as a love elixir, he thought in all sincerity was full of virtue. The minstrel chuckled to himself. “Now,” thought he, “will I render myself necessary to this fool;—now will I have free access to one of the sisters whenever I choose, and thus will I cheat these false thieves, and save the sweet maidens yet, until my trusty Brownbuskin comes to the rescue; and then—war-whoop in the lordly halls of Willenden!—Mayhap blood will flow instead of wine, and the groans of the dying succeed the music of the harp.”

“The lord of Willenden drinks to his fair guests. Will you pledge me, ladies?” said Le Boutelier to the sisters, bending gracefully towards Friedolinda, his face radiant with smiles, and his soft voice quivering with tenderness.

Friedolinda raised the cup to her lips, and Le Boutelier, as his eye met hers, thought she looked kindly upon him as she drank. Marian pledged him so frankly and cordially, that for the instant he thought she was more lovely than her sister. The impression, however, was but transient; and another glance at the dark hair and sorrowful blue eyes of Friedolinda, convinced him that she indeed was the queen of loveliness, and that her pensive and placid beauty was the more bewitching of the two. He took her by the hand, and she did not withdraw it; it was warm, and the pulse beat high! and on the brow of Le Boutelier—entranced in passion—the veins arose. His blood flowed more rapidly through his frame, and his eyes sparkled; while in low and musical tones he told his love-tale to her ear. She was obliged to

listen, but she was so confused and bewildered, and so indignant with herself for playing, even for a moment, a false part—and Le Boutelier's whole soul was so fully occupied with her, that neither of them paid much attention to what was going on around them. The old gleeman looked at the sisters from time to time, and ever and anon a quiet glance, full of intelligence, from Marian, gave him to understand that they were playing a part, and that they had new hopes from his presence.

De Tronsebours, with a grim look, which he intended should be one of indifference and ease, filled two cups which stood before him nearly to the brim with wine, into the one of which he had previously, unseen by every one except the minstrel, sprinkled the marvellous white powder, that he had built so many hopes upon. "Will the lovely Marian pledge her devoted slave?" said he with a smile. "Will the fairest of women pledge the most gallant of men?"

Marian could not refrain from laughter; for, much as she detested the sight of De Tronsebours, there was something so ludicrous in this compliment to himself, and the tone in which he paid it, that it quite overcame her. Her laugh was contagious, and was taken up by the old gleeman and Almeric Talybois, who sat immediately opposite to her. The sound of the merriment of the latter was peculiarly obnoxious to De Tronsebours, and, for the instant, forgetting Marian altogether, he turned to Talybois with a fierce look, and asked him what he meant by insulting him?

"Pooh! pooh! man, pooh!" said Almeric, "keep thy wrath warm till to-morrow; but an thou must know why I laughed, I will tell thee—ha! ha! ha! The most gallant of men drinks to the fairest of women—ha! ha! ha! Who would not laugh at a swine if it dared to admire an angel, and to think itself gallant too?"

A glow of crimson suffused the face of De Tronsebours, as he saw that the bright eyes of Marian twinkled with merriment at this speech, and he bent down to Almeric Talybois and whispered in his ear, "I have borne thy gibes too long, but this is the last of them," said he, with a bitter emphasis. "I will be thy jest no longer."

"Renounce the fair Marian," said Almeric, in a whisper, "and I will never make a jest of thee, or call thee a fool again. Renounce her for ever, and show thy wisdom. Thou hast no chance against me."

"Wouldst thou dare," replied De Tronsebours, "to contend with me?"

"Ay, and win the prize too, as thou shalt see," rejoined Almeric, stroking his chin complacently. "So sit thee down

quietly, and do not make a bigger fool of thyself than thou art already."

"By the Holy Virgin!" said De Tronsebours, "this is not to be borne. There, liar! slave! villain!" he added, to the consternation of the fair sisters, and of all the company—"take that—and that!" and, as he spoke, he struck his quondam friend a violent blow on the face, which was as rapidly succeeded by another.

In an instant, the sword of Almeric Talybois sprang from its scabbard, and gleamed in the light, and in another would have been buried in the bosom of Roger De Tronsebours, had not Sir Robert De Gonys seized him by the arm, and placed himself between the combatants.

"For shame! gentlemen—for shame!" said he, "that ye could not keep from brawling even in the presence of the ladies."

"Shame on you—shame on you!" said Le Boutelier.

"I will have his blood!" said De Tronsebours, fiercely.

"Not here," interposed Almeric Talybois, recovering his self-possession, and sitting down as quietly as if nothing had happened; "thou shalt not brawl with me in the sight of the beautiful Marian, of whom I beg pardon with all my heart and soul, for having been stung for a moment, and for having forgotten myself when she was so near me. We will settle this business another time."

"Well spoken, Almeric," said the master of the feast; "and I myself will see that thou hast justice for the wrong he has done thee. Roger De Tronsebours, if thou wilt not have two battles to fight instead of one, thou must leave the room instantly."

"I will not," replied De Tronsebours, doggedly. "Am I a slave?"

"Thou shalt," answered Le Boutelier, very calmly; "and if thou wilt not walk away, thou shalt be carried; so make thy choice."

"I will do neither," said De Tronsebours, sitting down again, "and he who dares to touch me shall be a dead man the next moment, whether he be knight or villein. Here I will remain."

Le Boutelier had never seen his friend exhibit so much determination, and he was loth that further violence should take place before the eyes of Friedolinda; but his word had gone forth, and he was in some perplexity how to act. In this emergency, Marian, though she was not aware of the service she was doing him, came opportunely to his aid. When the unseemly uproar first broke out, she had clung in

terror to the arm of her sister, but had gradually recovered her presence of mind.

"Let me intercede for him," said she, all blushing as she spoke; "but only upon condition that he beg pardon of us all, and of the worthy Almeric De Talybois in particular."

"At the request of the lovely Marian I will do anything," replied De Tronsebours, rather snappishly, "except beg the pardon of that fellow Talybois. I would rather die first."

"Oh, but thou must," said Marian, surprised at her own boldness, "or you are a false knight."

"Nay, lady, be not so hard upon me," replied De Tronsebours. "This much I will do. I will sit at the other end of the table, and will not so much as look at him, or speak one word to recal what has passed. There is time enough to-morrow for my vengeance."

"That will do," said Le Boutelier; "and we owe warm thanks to the sweet Marian for acting the peace-maker. So take thy place, Tronsebours, and remain quiet."

"But I had pledged the fair peace-maker," interposed Tronsebours, "and she must drink to me or I agree to nothing."

"With all my heart," said Marian; and De Tronsebours pushed the goblet towards her, containing his marvellous elixir, as he thought it, and she drank waes-hael to him.

"I shall conquer them all yet," thought De Tronsebours to himself, as his eyes met those of the gleeman. "I shall prosper in my love, and in my revenge too, perhaps;" and he withdrew to the other end of the table, and spoke not another word till the feast was over.

The old gleeman was now called upon for a song, to restore the harmony of the night. He shook back from his smooth, capacious brow the venerable hairs that overshadowed it, and taking his instrument, swept the strings with the firm, free hand that showed he was master of it; and after prelude for awhile, began the following to a soft, plaintive air:—

"What is love without esteem,

Ladye, ladye?

Vain and fleeting as a dream,

My sweet ladye.

Though it sparkle fair to-night,

It shall fade by morning's light,

My sweet ladye.

"What are gold and pearl and gem,

Ladye, ladye?

Love can live, though wanting them,

My sweet ladye.

Vain the thought, that wealth can buy

Favour in true woman's eye,

My sweet ladye.

"Tis not pow'r, or wealth, or face,
 Ladye, ladye,
 That can reconcile disgrace,
 My sweet ladye.
 Faithful hearts, and fond like thine,
 Spurn the bribe, howe'er it shine,
 My sweet ladye.

"Then away with gems and gold,
 Ladye, ladye,
 And this hope for ever hold,
 My sweet ladye;
 That the sun shines after rain,
 And the lost are found again,
 My sweet ladye."

The air was familiar to Friedolinda, and the song was so applicable to her own situation, that her eyes filled with tears as it proceeded. On Le Boutelier it produced a very different impression; and though not knowing exactly whether the allusions in it were intentional or accidental, he was anything but pleased with it. "I am afraid," said he to the minstrel, but still politely, "that thou hast lost the spirit and the cunning of thine art. Thy song is enough to send one to sleep. Hast nothing merry in thy budget?" Sing to us of the delights, not of the pains of love; or anything but such a puling ditty as the last."

"I am sorry the song does not please you," said the gleeman, carelessly, "but I have more if you like to hear them;" and he precluded again on his instrument, to a bolder strain; for he saw, by the eyes of the sisters, that he had conveyed a hope to them; and he was willing to please Le Boutelier in the next, if he could, and lull his awakened suspicions.—"Shall it be of war, or of the chase?"

"Of neither—neither," said Le Boutelier, "let thy song be of passionate love and truth,—such a song as shall melt the cold heart of beauty into tenderness, and thou shalt have a guerdon of gold from me, and thanks from the eyes of Friedolinda."

"For the last reward," said the gleeman, with a gracious smile to the sisters, "who would not be inspired to do his best? Would that my harp were more worthy of its fair listeners;" and again he struck the chords, preparatory to another song, when he was suddenly interrupted by an incident which put a total stop to the festivities of the evening.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Away he steals, with open listening ear,
Full of foul hope—

* * * * *

Within his thought her heavenly image sits.

SHAKSPEARE.

It was a retainer of the house of Willenden, clad in complete steel, whose sudden entry interrupted the song. He announced that a stranger, alone and unattended, was at the gate, who demanded immediate speech of Sir William Le Boutelier, on a matter of life and death. The guests looked into each other's faces; Friedolinda and Marian pressed close to each other, and their hands met, and were intertwined in alarm and affection, and the old gleeman looked at them both, and assumed an indifference which he did not feel.

"What sort of a man is he?" inquired Le Boutelier.

"A fair young man, with a merry countenance."

"Tell him we are not at leisure just now; we are better engaged."

"So I did," replied the retainer; "but he said it was a matter of life and death, not to one, but to many; and he would not be denied."

"Fair ladies, by your leave," said Le Boutelier, rising, and bending with a gentle courtesy to his guests, "I will see who this awful messenger is, and hear what he has to say. De Tronsebours, come thou with me; thou dost not appear very well satisfied where thou art, and when we have despatched this nameless personage, we will return again."

De Tronsebours cast one grim look towards Almeric Talibois, who, however, either did not, or would not, see it, and followed Le Boutelier from the hall to the antechamber, whither the stranger had been conducted. There they found a fair-haired, muscular, good-humoured-looking man, awaiting them, clad in a half suit of armour, but with no other arms than a sword.

"My name," said the stranger, "is Robert de Robaulx, and I am sent here to deliver a message, which may be peace or war, as you choose to interpret it."

Le Boutelier looked at him with a well-bred stare. He said nothing, however, but waited quietly till the speaker explained himself more clearly.

"I am charged by William Fitzosbert, or Longbeard, lord of the Saxons of London, and by Bryan Fitzosbert, or the Brownbuskin, lord of the wild woods of Kent, whom you have

plundered of treasures dearer than gold, to demand their restitution."

"Well, by the rood," said Le Boutelier, laughing outright, "they might have chosen a more intelligible messenger! What do the knaves want?"

"They are not knaves, but true men," replied De Robaulx, undauntedly, "and I wish I could say as much for you. But they demand, and I demand, that you immediately set free Friedolinda and Marian Jordan."

"The young women are free guests," replied Le Boutelier, "and are happy in remaining here. Tell your friends that."

"Have a care," said De Robaulx; "it is dangerous to exasperate desperate men. Give up the young women, and it will be better for you, and all your house. Friedolinda Jordan is the betrothed wife of William Longbeard."

"What matters that? She has found a new lover, and cares nothing for the old one. Tell William Longbeard that."

"The other," continued De Robaulx, heedless of the interruption, "was destined by her father to become my bride, and I will avenge her."

"Thy bride!" said De Tronsebours, breaking silence for the first time, and walking up to the herald, and surveying him leisurely from top to toe; "well, that is a good joke. Thy bride! ha! ha! Why, man, dost thou think thou hast any chance against me, or that the promise of a beggarly tanner is worth a straw? Get thee gone, sirrah, and learn this for thy comfort, that the fair Marian loves a hair of my head better than she loves thy whole body."

"Thou liest!" said De Robaulx, with a steady look and an unhesitating voice, and clapping his hand on the hilt of his weapon, "thou liest! again and again!"

"Is this to be endured?" said De Tronsebours, appealing to Le Boutelier, "will you not have this fellow whipped and gagged, and put into a dungeon?"

"Not I, i'faith," answered Le Boutelier; "the lie was fairly given, and if you cannot resent it, you need not ask me to help you. I rather admire the young man's courage. So take your own part, De Tronsebours."

But De Tronsebours was awed by the imposing appearance, the well-knit limbs, the muscular arm, the daring eye, and the bold tone of the herald. "I would not draw my sword and sully its blade by the dirty blood of such a low-born vassal Saxon as he is," said he, half drawing the weapon, and then pushing it down forcibly into its sheath, till it clattered again. Besides, I will make allowances for him; 'tis a hard thing, even for a base churl, to be jilted by a fair

maid—so let him rail; the love of Marian will make me amends."

"Liar! and fool as well!" said the herald; "but I will waste no more words on you. Once more, Sir William Le Boutelier, will you deliver up the young women, and spare bloodshed?"

"I will not," said Le Boutelier. "I could not do it even if I wished. They are happy in this house, and do not desire to leave it. So you have your answer, and it is only because I think you are a brave man yourself, that I condescend to parley with you."

"Hear me again," said the herald, with a stiff bow. "I am sent by those who will not believe this tale, and who will take no refusal. Perhaps you would like to hear, before you answer finally, what means they have, when they resort to force, as I fear they must do?"

"I have answered finally;—but what is the great force you speak of?"

"Within bow-shot," said the herald, "there are more than a hundred stanch, valiant, and desperate men, commanded by a bereaved father and two insulted lovers."

"Well, well," said Le Boutelier; "the castle of Willenden can bear the assaults of a tanner, had he five times as many men. So you have your answer once more, and may depart with it as soon as you like."

"You would not be such a fool as to let this fellow go?" said De Tronsebours.

"As for that matter," said the herald, in a tone of great indifference, "he may do as he pleases; but if I am not back again to those who sent me, by sunrise to-morrow morning, the havoc will begin."

"Believe me," said Le Boutelier, "when I tell you sincerely, that I would not harm you on any account, and that it did not require a threat to induce me to let you go. But you may tell William Longbeard this, if he do not depart within twenty-four hours, I will have a thousand men here for his hundred. Tell him, moreover, that if he thinks I have wronged him, the law is open to him. There is justice in England."

"Ay, for the rich man," said the herald. "And is this your answer?"

"I have said it."

"Then God protect the innocent, and let the penalty of blood fall upon the heads of those whose ill deeds cause it to be shed. Farewell!"

"Farewell, Robert de Robaulx!" said the Lord of Willenden, as the herald took his departure, and was escorted out

by the man-at-arms, who had been present during the interview; and then he added, turning to De Tronsebours, "he is not a bad fellow, that; I wish he lived in better company."

"An insolent jackanapes!" said De Tronsebours, "I could scarcely keep my sword out of his ribs."

"Pooh—pooh! you showed wisdom, for once in your life, by keeping it in its scabbard; you would have had the worst of it, or I cannot tell valour when I see it."

"Very likely you cannot," muttered De Tronsebours. "But may there not be some truth in this fellow's words?" he added aloud; "and would you not do well to take some measures for defending the place, should we be attacked, as it seems very likely we shall be? What a double fool you were to let him go. We cannot muster a hundred men; and we may be set upon in the dead of the night, and burned in our beds. I know this Brownbuskin of old, and would sooner have the devil for my enemy than him."

"The devil's a friend of yours," said Le Boutelier, with a smile. "But you are right, nevertheless, and we must be prepared. First of all, we must put an end to the feasting for to-night;—there will be time enough to-morrow." And Le Boutelier, with more seriousness than he had yet shown, proceeded back to the banqueting-hall, followed by De Tronsebours, whose face was paler than its wont, and whose long red nose shone all the more redly from the unusual contrast.

Friedolinda and Marian had already taken the opportunity to withdraw;—a circumstance which relieved Le Boutelier from the embarrassment of suddenly interrupting his festival in their presence. He announced in a few words to his friends and retainers that it was probable an attack of some kind might be made upon them by the followers of Brownbuskin, aided by some adventurers from London, and that it was therefore necessary they should remain all night upon the watch. De Gony and Almeric Talybois had each a station assigned to him, and every man was furnished with additional arms. Cross-bows, halberds, pikes, and swords, were taken from their places on the wall, where they hung in glittering array, and were distributed among all the vassals and retainers of the lord of Willenden; and in less than half-an-hour every man was at his post, and on the alert. Le Boutelier (no longer the conceited, effeminate coxcomb that he usually appeared to be when no danger menaced him, or no great occasion called his energies into play; but an active, clear-sighted, hardy, and resolute man) visited every hole and corner of his abode—had his drawbridge raised, his portcullises down—his bolts fastened, and his men-at-arms posted at every loop-hole to ward off a foe. He spoke but few words

—no more than were strictly necessary to make his orders intelligible; and had he been seen at that instant by De Robaulx, would have been considered a more dangerous opponent than the herald was willing to allow after the specimen he had had of him. The old gleeman, upon whom he looked with distrust, was not forgotten, but consigned to the watchful guardianship of De Tronsebours, with orders on no account to suffer him out of his presence. He could not have been consigned to worse hands for Le Boutelier's purpose; but this he did not discover till it was too late.

These two were left in the banqueting hall, with three men-at-arms posted in the embrasures of the windows. De Tronsebours, to drown his vexation at his quarrel with his friend Almerie Talybois, had drunk rather too copiously of the wines of Willenden; and the gleeman, who saw his state, plied him with another bumper, to make him communicative as soon as Le Boutelier had left them.

"Success to thy wooing," said the old man, taking a deep draught, "and health to the pretty Marian;—thou wilt drink *that*?"

"Am I a man?" said De Tronsebours. "Long life to her, say I, and a soft heart speedily!" and he drained a bumper as he spoke.—"But what hast thou done to offend Sir William Le Boutelier? He has made thee my prisoner."

"Well, my jolly gaoler," returned the gleeman, "better thine than any other person's. But curse me if I can understand what all this pother is about. What's the matter?"

De Tronsebours put his finger to his nose and spoke in a whisper. "They are going to rescue the young women," said he.

"Rescue?" returned the gleeman, opening his eyes wide, and speaking as if he doubted it. "I can't believe it. Who would dare——"

"The girls have lovers," said De Tronsebours, still in a whisper, "and they are hereabouts somewhere, with a hundred men at their heels to burn the house down."

"Wh—w—he—ew!" said the gleeman in a sort of whistle; "it is well, then, if thou lovest the pretty Marian, that we gave her the elixir to-night. Who knows what may happen by to-morrow?"

"Will it work to-night, thinkest thou?" said De Tronsebours, and his dull eye sparkled, and his pale cheek grew for an instant as red as his nose—"Ay, it must and it shall."

"There are certain things to be done first," replied the gleeman, still in a whisper, and looking suspiciously towards the archers, who were stationed in the embrasure—"Not ~~that~~ I fear any rescue—not I—but I know that love is im-

patient, though I never experienced it myself—but you know what I mean?”

“I can’t say that I do,” said De Tronsebours, rubbing his forehead.

“You have drunk too much, friend, and your wit is clouded.”

“No, on the honour of a soldier—I am quite sober—go on.”

“Are you so dull, then, as to think that you can be beloved only by means of an elixir—do you think there is nothing else to be done?”

“Ah—ah—I see,” said De Tronsebours, “I must show myself—I must make myself agreeable, and show forth all my gallantry.—I faith, I shall not be long in doing that.”

“She would spit at thee, man, wert thou to present thyself before her with so much wine in thy paunch;—wait a little—I’m thy friend, thou knowest.”

“Ay—ay—but what then?”

“Thou must get me out of this room, and conduct me alone to the apartment of the girl. There is an incantation to be made ere the potion will work—there are ceremonies to be performed, which none must witness—not even thou—but thou mayest remain at the door, however, and keep watch, lest we be interrupted—dost understand?”

“I don’t like these ceremonies,” said De Tronsebours, “I’ll have none of them.”

“Then good night,” said the gleeman; “I have done with thee—I’ll take no more trouble about thee—I shall go to bed, and as thou art my gaoler, thou mayest keep watch over me, till the cock crows. Good night!”

“Do these ceremonies you speak of last long?—and may I not come and witness them?”

“Thou mayest come to the door, and look through the key-hole, if thou likest, but no further. However, I should be just as well pleased to have nothing more to do with thee, or thy love affairs. I have taken too much trouble for thee already.”

“Nay, nay,” said De Tronsebours; “finish thy work; I would have that ass of a fellow, Almeric Talybois, know, that in love I can triumph over him, if I cannot in war. But we must go softly and gently.”

“Hush—are those fellows looking?” said the gleeman, with a scarcely perceptible nod towards the windows.

“Never fear them,” replied De Tronsebours; “they are afraid of me, and have received no orders to keep a watch upon you. But how we are to get into the girl’s room, I know not; she keeps it fast locked, I can tell you.”

“Didst thou try it, then?”

"Ay—once, twice, thrice; but I was afraid of making a noise."

"Thou sly dog!" said the gleeman, giving him a poke in the ribs which made him start again, "but that does not matter. I can recite my incantations through the key-hole, and they will be just as effective as if we got inside. We'll find the door open soon enough."

"Come along, then," said De Tronsebours.

"Take a drink of this to clear your head first," replied the gleeman, handing him a goblet, "and let us walk warily."

De Tronsebours drank, as he was desired, and giving orders to the men-at-arms to keep a sharp look-out, he left the hall with the gleeman, and they proceeded together, unobserved by any one, through several dark passages, well known to the former, until they reached the remote turret where the sisters slept. Here they found themselves in total darkness, but De Tronsebours nevertheless easily found the door, and the two stopped beside it. They heard a whispering inside, and the gleeman recognised the voice of Marian.

"Sit down there!" he said to his companion, "we shall have to wait half-an-hour or so, and take care not to speak a word, whatever you hear or whatever you see," and he led him a few yards down the corridor, and forced him to sit on the ground with his back to the wall. The gleeman stood beside him for a minute, and by that time the audible snoring of De Tronsebours showed that he was in a deep sleep.

"Ha! ha!" said the gleeman, with a chuckle of satisfaction, "*thy* potion works, at any rate. An earthquake itself would not waken thee now, or for twelve hours to come. So take that—and that," he added, giving him a couple of kicks, which, had he been awake, would have made him rear again—and proceeded to the chamber-door of the sisters.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Now is he come unto the chamber door,
That shuts him from the heaven of his thought—

* * * * *

With more than admiration, he admired
Her azure veins, her alabaster skin.
Her coral lips, her snow-white dimpled chin."

SHAKESPEARE—*Rape of Lucrece*.

"AND now," thought the gleeman to himself, "I'm in a pretty predicament. Should I not make the wenches hear me, and be caught by Le Boutellier, or any of his

fellows, they would prove too many for me, and I should lie, I fear, in some of the damp dungeons he has threatened me with. But never mind—courage—I never was in a difficulty yet but what I got out of it. So, fair and softly—fair and softly, John-o'-the-Dingle, and thy good stars will aid thee! Curse that fellow! what a noise he makes," he added, as the deep hoarse snoring of De Tronsebours smote upon his ears, "he is enough to alarm the watch—I must silence him ere I can do anything," and he groped his way towards him, and bestowed a few more hearty kicks upon him. They had the anticipated effect; they partially aroused the sleeper, who turned a little, and slumbered more quietly than before.

Again groping cautiously along the dark corridor, the gleeman reached the chamber door, and knocked softly several times. He received no answer, and all was so quiet within, he thought the sisters must be asleep. He listened again for awhile, and thought he heard a step. Once more he knocked louder than before, but still there was no answer, and he was afraid to make much noise, lest he should alarm some of the guards, whom he knew to be stationed in various parts of the building. He put his mouth to the key-hole, and called both of the sisters by name, but all was silent. He tried again, after the lapse of a minute, but with the same result, or rather no result at all.

"That brutal fellow, Tronsebours," thought he, "has led me to the wrong door; he was too drunk to know what he was doing, and I could find it in my heart to go back and tweak his nose for him. Hark!" He heard a step, but it sounded in the corridor, very softly and gently, and the next instant he imagined that he could perceive a dim ray of light at the further end of it, which seemed to be approaching nearer. Like all the houses of that, and of much later periods, the place was full of nooks and angles, and intricate windings. By dint of groping and stumbling, he at last succeeded in ensconcing himself behind a projection, where, if light permitted, he might be able to see every one that passed, without being himself seen. We will leave him for awhile in this hiding-place, and follow the footsteps of the new comer.

It was the Lord of Willenden himself, who, with stealthy pace, like a robber, thus walked his own castle at the midnight. He carried a lantern in one hand, the light of which he carefully shaded with the other, and came along on tiptoe, to make as little noise as possible. The gleeman, as he approached, watched all his motions with much curiosity, and as he came near the spot where Tronsebours still lay insensible, he dreaded that he would stumble over him, and that

all would be discovered. The manner in which he shaded his lantern, prevented him from seeing a foot before him, and suddenly he kicked against the form of the sleeper, and fell over him, uttering a curse which he could not restrain. The lantern at the same time slipped from his hand, but it was not, however, extinguished. The gleeman crammed the skirt of his garment into his mouth, to prevent an explosion of laughter, as *Le Boutelier*, with a very rueful countenance, again seized the light and held it to the countenance of the sleeper. He seemed at first to think that the man was dead; but when he heard how loudly and how regularly he breathed, he seized hold of him by the ear, and pulled it with all his strength. *Tronsebours* made wry faces in abundance, and groaned audibly, but he was too much overpowered by the drug that the gleeman had put into his liquor, to see or understand what was going on about him, although he partially opened his eyes and looked at the light.

"Thou worse than hog," said *Le Boutelier*, still holding his ear; "get up, or I'll roll thee down the staircase."

As if he had been indeed the animal to which he had been compared, *Tronsebours* only replied to this speech by an audible snore, which was as much like a grunt as any human sound could be. *Le Boutelier* lifted his foot, as if he would have bestowed a parting kick upon him, but he restrained himself, and having dragged him nearer to the wall, turned him on his side, and looking cautiously around him, passed on. He stopped almost immediately opposite to the place where the gleeman was concealed, and pressing his hand against a panel in the wall, opened a secret door, through which he passed, and shut it noiselessly after him. The gleeman, who had been an attentive observer, noticed the spring that he had touched, and almost without taking time to reflect upon what he was doing, or the hazard he might be running, stepped from his hiding-place, determined to follow him. With some difficulty, owing to the thick darkness, he succeeded in touching the panel on the right place. It yielded to his pressure, and the door opened. He now found himself in a narrow passage, along which he groped his way for two or three yards, when he found that it suddenly branched off, both to the right and to the left. He hesitated a moment as to which he should follow, or whether he should proceed at all. "Let chance decide," thought he; "and may the saints protect me! If it were not that I never turn back when I have once begun. I should be very glad to be in the banqueting-hall again. The devil take the place, and the knave who built it!" said he, as he knocked his head against the coping; "that blow would have stunned a weaker man. But fair and softly, and stoop

low, John-o'-the-Dingle, it's no advantage to be tall or strong, or fat either, in this rat-hole. What have we here? Ha! another door." He put his hand against it, and, like the former, it yielded to the pressure, and he found himself behind an arras. He heard the gentle breathing of one asleep, and saw a ray of light that pierced the thin texture of the hangings, and after endeavouring in vain for some minutes to discover an opening, he took a hunting-knife from his girdle, and cut through the arras gently, till he had made an incision sufficient to admit him. It was the sleeping apartment of Marian Jordan, and so gently had he proceeded, that he stepped up to her bedside without awakening her. At that instant he was startled by a noise at the door, as if a bolt were being drawn, or undrawn, and grasping his weapon he stood ready to defend himself. The noise was not repeated, and walking on tip-toe to the door, apparently one of communication with another chamber, he discovered that the bolt had been shot. He took a similar precaution on his side, and gently turned the key. He then stole cautiously back to the bed-side, and gazed for awhile with admiration upon the lovely form that was extended upon it. Marian slept in her clothes; the gems and gold of Willenden Castle still glittered upon her white neck and arms, and the gleeman wished, as he looked upon her, that he were a young man for her sake, and had the felicity of being loved by so beautiful a creature. "Poor thing!" said he, to himself, "how she sleeps in the jaws of danger. My blood runs cold, to think of so much innocence and beauty surrounded by such villany and ugliness as there are here. Marian!" he said, taking her by the hand and shaking her, "Marian—awake!"

Marian started up in affright, and uttered a faint shriek, and an ejaculation of "Mercy!"

"Do not fear thy friend, my pretty maiden," said the gleeman, in a whisper, "but awaken and listen to me. There is danger abroad, and I am come to save thee."

Marian shaded back the long fair hair from her forehead, and looked more calmly upon the intruder; and when she saw who it was, she clung to him, for the sudden shock had taken away her strength, and she would have fallen to the ground had he not supported her.

"How did you get in here, John-o'-the-Dingle?" were her first words—"and what hopes have you brought us?—shall we be delivered from this place?"

"Thy questions are too many to be answered all at once, little girl," said he, "and I have no time to answer them, for I fear foul play is going on. I saw Sir William Le Boutelier stealing along even now, on evil thoughts intent—or else I

cannot read men's faces as I used to do; and I tracked him, and thought I should find him here. Where is thy sister?"

"God help us!" said Marian, turning as pale as marble, and trembling in all her limbs. "She was here just now—before I fell asleep. Let us seek her. In a corridor leading from the antechamber, there," she added, pointing to the door that somebody on the other side had just locked, "there is a window at which she loves to sit and gaze upon the sunrise and the sunset. She often rises at night, when she cannot sleep, and goes there to look out upon the moon and stars. Let us go."

"We cannot get that way," said the gleeman; "I heard the door locked on the other side as I entered here, and not knowing what to understand by it, I locked it as gently on this. See," he added, going towards the door, followed by Marian all anxious and trembling, "it is bolted."

"Friedolinda never did it—she would never shut me from her," said Marian. "God be merciful to me!—what is it you suspect?"

"It is beyond suspicion, I fear," replied the gleeman, shaking his head; "but we must not stand talking and shivering here, my girl; we must help—at least *I* must—but how the devil to do it I can't tell."

"Hark!" said Marian, "do you not hear voices?"

The gleeman put his ear against the door: "Yes," he added, after a minute, during which Marian stood in mute suspense, and clasped her hands fervently together; "I hear the voices of Le Boutelier and your sister. Could I but undo that bolt, I should be tempted to put an end to his love and his hatred together. The unmanly villain! Stay there, Marian, and lend me the light."

"O let me go with you," said Marian, clinging to him. "I will fear nothing."

"Come along, then," replied the gleeman, leading the way through the arras by which he had entered, followed by the pale and trembling girl, filled with thoughts of danger and suffering, she knew not what, but implicitly trusting the man whom she knew to be the stanch friend of Bryan Fitzosbert. "Stoop here," he said, as they came to the entrance of the low narrow passage, against the coping of which he had given his head so furious a knock a few minutes previously, "and make as little noise as thou canst, Marian. We are in the right track, I think, but we must make haste. Yes, we are right!" he added, as he came to the spot where the passage branched off to the other side. "As Le Boutelier did not go by the way we came, he must have taken the other; there are but two of them. Follow, and keep fast hold of me—this

way—stoop again! By St. Peter! this little taper of thine is worth gold, Marian. There—mind the step—now thou art down—softly; now there are two steps up again—gently, gently—hush!—we are right—step there—here is an arras similar to thine; now stop and listen a minute.”

Marian held her breath, but her heart beat so loud she was afraid its pulsation might betray them. The gleeman grasped her hand, and though he uttered not a word, his looks reassured her.

“Let me kneel to thee and worship thee, my own, my adorable Friedolinda,” said the voice of Sir William Le Boutelier; “grant me but one embrace; do not deny one to so true and so passionate a lover.”

“Oh, do not mock me, Sir William Le Boutelier,” replied Friedolinda; “let your better nature gain the mastery over you. What a poor triumph it would be to use the advantage of your strength to the injury of a weak woman.”

“Oh thou art strong in beauty, Friedolinda; thine eyes have conquered my soul, and made a slave of it. Do not make me desperate, but yield thyself lovingly, and thou shalt be the richest lady in England—thou shalt have gold and jewels, more than thou canst number.”

“You could not tempt me, were you King of England,” replied Friedolinda, in a firm voice. “Keep off your hands, sir,” she added, still more firmly. “Step not one pace nearer towards me, or I will alarm the castle.”

“Nobody would hear; and if anybody did, they would not assist thee,” said Le Boutelier, while behind the arras the gleeman gave a significant look to his alarmed and almost fainting companion. “Nearer I must and will come. How beautiful thou art in thine anger—how heavenly thou must look in thy kindness, Friedolinda! Once more I will ask thee humbly and devotedly as a lover should, wilt thou be mine?”

“Such as you, when you talk of love, blaspheme the name. I scorn and despise you!” said Friedolinda.

“Despise me, thou shalt not!” said Le Boutelier, “for thou shalt see that I am strong and resolute. I fear, my pretty tyrant, I have been patient with thee too long, and have humoured thy caprices till I have made thee proud. But the hour has come, Friedolinda, when thy pride shall be humbled. Once more, think upon what I offer thee, and then smile upon me, as a woman should upon the man who not only gives his heart, his dearest treasure, but wealth and power to boot.”

“You have had my answer.”

“Thou lookest so beautiful in thy scorn,” said Le Boute-

lier, "that I begin to doubt whether kindness would more become thee. Thou seest this taper?" .

There was no reply.

"There! it is extinguished, and my patience with it," said Le Boutelier: "not even that light shall see thy blushes and my triumph."

"Villain!—oh, villain!" said Marian, behind the arras, as she heard a violent scuffle in the room, succeeded by the shrieks of Friedolinda, that pierced sadly through the lofty rooms of the castle. "Help! help!"

Neither Le Boutelier nor Friedolinda heard her voice nor the commotion that immediately ensued; and when the gleeman cut through the arras and threw a light upon the room, he saw the Norman bearing Friedolinda shrieking in his arms along the corridor. In an instant the gleeman was upon him, and he fastened his hands upon the Norman's throat so tightly, that he grew black in the face, and gasped for breath. "Villain,—unworthy of knighthood!" said he, "release the girl immediately, or I will strangle thee!"

Friedolinda fell from the arms of the Norman upon the floor, where she lay for a few moments insensible; and Marian bent over her and covered her face with her tears and kisses. The gleeman dragged Le Boutelier from them, and threw him violently to the ground. The Norman arose, smarting with the pain of his fall, and absolutely shaking with rage, as violently as if he had been in a fit of the ague. His cheeks were pale as death, and his blanched lips quivered like aspen leaves, as with furious gesticulations he drew his sword and rushed at the gleeman. The latter was more calm, and parried the thrust with his hunting knife. The taper shed a dim light upon the combat, and Le Boutelier, blinded by his rage, gave his opponent all the advantage. The gleeman closed with him, wrenched his sword from his grasp, and throwing him again to the floor, held the point of the weapon to his breast, and swore to plunge it into him to the haft if he moved.

"Now sue for thy life," said the gleeman, "or thou hast not a moment to live!"

"I defy thee, thou hoary traitor!" replied Le Boutelier, in a faint voice—"kill me if thou darest;—and ere the dawn thy carcass will hang on a gibbet in my court-yard!"

"I'll run the risk of that," said the gleeman.

"Spare him! spare him!" said Friedolinda, reviving and clasping her hands to intercede for him;—"let us only get away from this place;—let us fly, ere his companions are alarmed. I do not want his life; let me only have my liberty!"

"Upon second thoughts," said the gleeman, "I don't think I shall kill the rascal. I will make better use of him. If you attempt to rise," he added, turning to Le Boutelier, and still pointing the sword at his bosom—"you are a dead man;" and as he spoke, he put his hand into a leathern pouch that hung from his girdle, and drew forth an instrument which the sisters knew not the use of, or had even seen before, but which Le Boutelier knew too well. It was a gag, and in an instant it was firmly fixed in the mouth of the prostrate Norman. The gleeman then unbuckled his leathern belt, and bound the hands of the Norman so effectually together, as to render him quite helpless. Seeing himself in this state, he began to kick upon the floor with great violence, to raise the alarm.

"We will soon silence that noise," said the gleeman, taking the sword-belt from the Norman's waist, and binding it round his legs, so that he could not move them. "Now lie there,—pray for thy misdeeds, and recommend thy soul to heaven."

The sisters looked on in wonder. "Now, girls," said the old man, "we have a difficult task to play—more difficult than you have any idea of. But we must get through it, and that speedily; for by cock-crowing all the knaves in this castle will be on the look-out for their master. It is lucky for us that he placed you in this remote corner, or thy shrieks, my little rescued bird, would have brought a whole pack of vagabonds upon us. We must keep up our spirits, and put a bold face upon the matter, or we shall be undone yet."

"Oh! never fear us," said both of the sisters; "tell us what we shall do;—we have no help—no hope—but in you."

"I know it,—and will do my best. I little thought, that at my years I should be so useful to the ladies. But you must obey me—and above all, keep your tongues quiet—if that be possible. If you speak a word, but as I direct you, we shall be lost. But great as the danger is, I can't help laughing," continued the gleeman.—"Thou seest the condition of thy lover, Friedolinda—see how savagely he looks at us—but his looks will do no harm. Let me show thee now the condition of Marian's. "Come hither;" and taking up the lamp, he undid the fastenings of the chamber-door, and stepped out into the corridor, followed by the trembling and bewildered sisters. After proceeding for a few paces, he pointed to something coiled up in a corner, and rolling it over, exposed to view the prostrate form of Roger Tronsebours, still so fast asleep, as to be quite unconscious of the violence that was done him. The gleeman's laugh was louder than he himself approved of; Marian bit her lips, to prevent her from

following his example. When the gleeman had explained how he came into that state, and how he had made a dupe of him, contempt and mirth strove for awhile for mastery on the fair face of Marian, until mirth finally gained the victory. The gleeman stooped down, stripped the embroidered mantle from the shoulders of the sleeper, pulled off his spurred boots, took his sword from his side, and his cap from his head, and entered the chamber, inviting the sisters to follow.

"Now Marian," said he, "thou shalt don the attire of thy admirer, and put thy dainty feet into his jack-boots—I hope to God thou wilt be able to walk in them. There, draw them on quickly, and never mind me—this is not the time for maiden squeamishness—and I am too old, and too cold, and too honourable, to fall in love with thy pretty foot and ankle, though thou dost expose them. There—that is well done—now for the cap—put back those flowing locks, my girl, or they will spoil all. Let me help thee—nay, never blush—thou canst do that to-morrow, when all is over. Now the cloak—and wrap it well round thee—now walk with a swagger. That will do—bravely, bravely!"—he added, as Marian strutted across the room, and imitated the gait of her quondam lover to admiration. "Egad, thy little snub-nose will spoil all—it is not a quarter big enough, and lacks redness. However, as we shall not show ourselves in a very strong light, it will not so much matter. Canst thou not pull it a little thyself, and bring some colour into it?"

"You must excuse that part of the ceremony—indeed you must," replied Marian; "but for the sake of pity, never tell anybody what a fool I have made of myself—I shall be the laughing-stock of London."

"Pooh—pooh!" said the gleeman, "let those laugh who win. Now, Friedolinda, it is thy turn. Thy admirer, I must say, is not a bad looking fellow, and the disguise, in thy case, will not be quite so difficult. Stay ye both here, while I despoil him."

The gleeman passed into the other room, where Le Bouteiller still lay, brooding deep vengeance, but quite unable to help himself. In a few minutes, the gleeman, heedless of the angry glances which he darted at him, and the smothered groans of rage and spite which came from his mouth, took up his jaunty cap, which had fallen to the floor in the recent struggle, stripped off his gay mantle, and his vest, and even his breast-plate of mail. His boots and spurs came next, and, half naked, the gleeman left him to the companionship of his rage and guilt—the worst company that even Le Bouteiller had ever found himself in.

"Don thou these, Friedolinda," said the minstrel, "thy lover has a small foot—a very delicate foot for so bold a baron—and thou mayst walk comfortably in his boots and spurs. Thou canst bear the weight of a little armour, so let me adjust it. I know something of such gear, and shall be no bad substitute for a tire-woman. There! now thou lookest a knight indeed; and, by my faith, if thine eyes were but grey, instead of blue, and had a little less fire and modesty in them, thou wouldst not be very unlike Sir William Le Boutelier.—Now the sword—and carelessly—and as if it were not quite a novelty to thee. That will do! Now follow me, and let me be the spokesman, as I am the leader of this enterprise; and remember this—a want of courage or self-possession may ruin all, and throw thee, Friedolinda, into the arms of Le Boutelier, without hope of succour;—thee, Marian, into the drunken embrace of that hog, Tronsebours, and me into a dungeon, where, if ever I saw daylight again, it would be to be hanged;—now, are you ready?"

The sisters assented in silence, and the gleeman, carrying the light, and shading it a little with his hand, so that the rays fell chiefly upon the ground, walked down the way he had been previously led by Tronsebours, and of which he had noted, and well remembered every step. It was necessary to pass through the banquet-hall, where he knew that three men-at-arms were stationed; but as there was no possibility of avoiding, he went boldly through it. The men turned round as the three entered, but seeing Le Boutelier, as they thought, they took no further notice, and remained at their post. Just as they arrived at the door, they were suddenly met by Almeric Talybois, who ran up against the gleeman, before either was aware that another was coming.

"How now!" said Almeric, drawing his sword, and placing himself so as to prevent the gleeman's exit—"whither art thou bound?"

"H—u—sh!" replied the gleeman, with a long drawn sound, and putting up his finger, as if to crave that he would be cautious—"see you to your post, lest danger menace it. Sir William Le Boutelier follows me, and Tronsebours with him—you will learn more anon—make haste to your post, for I can tell you, you will be wanted—we will be with you there speedily." Almeric Talybois stepped aside; and as they shot rapidly past him, Friedolinda's heart beat high, and Marian's whole face, not excepting her nose, was as red as the gleeman had wished it, a few minutes before.

"What's in the wind now?" thought Almeric, as he watched them receding amid the darkness; "but I must not wait here.

There's danger somewhere, that's clear," and he passed through the banqueting-hall to an upper tower, where the bowmen under his orders were stationed.

The gleeman and his fair companions went on as before, passing the various guards without interruption, and arrived in safety at the warden's tower, where that functionary was found alone, the drawbridge fastened up, and himself comfortably reclining in his easy-chair.

"Arouse thee, thou lazy dog!" said the gleeman, pulling him off the chair. "By St. Peter! and thou wilt be dismissed from thy service to-morrow, for daring to fall asleep in this time of danger—get up and stir thyself."

"I was not asleep—I swear it by all the saints!" said the warden, "and I hope my honoured lord will believe me," he added, turning to Friedolinda with the most respectful tone and manner.

"No, no!" said Friedolinda, imitating the soft voice of *Le Boutelier*, "but stir thyself more—and do not speak—but act."

"Let down the bridge," said the gleeman, "and see thou keep a watchful look out until we return—we shall not be long."

Friedolinda and Marian shrank into the shade as much as they could, without exciting suspicion, as the warden, without further hesitation, arose and let down the bridge. It made a creaking sound, which smote to the very hearts of the sisters, and made the colour forsake their cheeks. Even the swarthy weather-beaten face of the gleeman grew pale at the sound.

"Nay, go thou first, my worthy lord," said he to Friedolinda; "it is for you to lead us, and *Tronsebours* and I will follow," and so saying, he took hold of Marian's arm, and followed Friedolinda, as with firm step she marched across the drawbridge. At every instant the sisters fancied that they heard the voice of *Le Boutelier* in the rear—the moonlight that played upon the waters of the moat they imagined to be the glimmer of the lamps in the hands of the aroused inhabitants of the castle; and every breath of wind that stirred the leaves of the trees, sounded to their ears like the whispers of men communicating their suspicions to each other.

"The bolder we are the better," said the gleeman to Marian in an under tone, as he stopped on the very middle of the bridge, and of course within full view of the warden, and pointed with his finger, as if directing the attention of his companion to some object floating in the moat. "Stay there a little and busy thyself," he added. "until I come back—I shall scarcely be a minute;" and Friedolinda and

Marian drew closer together, and appeared as if engaged in earnest consultation, while the gleeman, with importance in all his steps, and an easy confidence in his eyes, walked back again to the spot where the warden still remained to draw the bridge up again.

"My lord charges thee to keep a stricter watch," said he. "What is that floating in the moat yonder—thou hast better eyes than mine—is it a man's head?"

The warden looked as directed. "'Tis but a log of wood," said he, "that has been floating there these three days."

"Art thou sure? For myself, I fear there are traitors abroad," said the gleeman, in a confidential whisper; "and it behoves every one in this castle, from the highest to the lowest, to be on the look-out. If thou shuttest one of thy lazy eyes until we return, it is likely that by to-morrow morning thou wilt have none to shut. I brought that message from thy lord—so take care of thyself." And so saying, the gleeman turned back and rejoined the sisters, who were trembling with dread at his delay.

"Walk on," said he, "warily—warily—but boldly—and once we are over this bridge, the devil take Willenden and all its inhabitants!"

Their hearts were lightened of a load of apprehension as they set foot upon the greensward on the other side, and heard the noise made by the warden in drawing up the bridge, and the rattle of the chains as he fastened it.

"Now's the time to show your speed," said the gleeman. "Imagine yourselves to be a couple of does pursued by the hounds, and run accordingly. They will be on the scent ere long, unless we are nimble. Once under the shadow of green leaves, and we'll defy them."

Hope and fear alike lent speed to their limbs; but they had scarcely proceeded five hundred yards, when a loud shout and halloo were heard behind them, succeeded by the trampling of horses' hoofs.

"Discovered!" said the gleeman; "fly—fly!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

"By my good faythe, say'd the noble Percy,
 Now haste thou rede full ryght,
 Yet will I never yelde me to thee,
 Whyle I may stonde and fyght.

"They swapped together, whyle that they swette,
 Wyth swordys sharpe and long :—"

Battle of Otterbourne.

SIR WILLIAM LE BOUTELIER, although so slim and slightly built, to all outward appearance, was a man of great personal strength. Stung to the quick by the treatment he received from the gleeman—exasperated to frenzy by the loss of Fricdolinda at the very moment when he thought to have made her his own—the fury of his mind gave increased vigour to his frame, and he struggled so violently in the bonds with which the gleeman had bound him, that after the lapse of a few minutes he succeeded, though with some difficulty, in releasing his hands. To tear the gag from his mouth was his next effort; which done, he called as loudly as he was able for assistance. None, however, was within hearing; but this was a matter of no consequence when his limbs were free. He soon released his feet, and groped his way along the corridor, narrowly escaping another fall over the prostrate form of Tronsebours, still unconscious and fast asleep. Here he called loudly for lights and assistance. His cries were heard by Almeric Talybois, who immediately hastened to the spot, followed by a number of bowmen and halberdiers, who imagined that the castle had been taken, and had their weapons ready for the death-struggle with the foe. Great was their surprise to find that the noise proceeded from the Lord of Willenden alone; and Almeric looked first at him, bootless, capless, cloakless, and swordless, and then at Tronsebours, extended at full length upon the floor, with an astonishment which was at first too great for words.

"Give me a sword one of you," said Le Boutelier, furiously, "and a fleet horse, and mount all and follow me."

"Why, what's this?" said Talybois, as soon as he could speak. "Did I not see you and Roger Tronsebours and the old gleeman pass out through the hall a minute ago?"

"Dolts and asses! all of you!" exclaimed Le Boutelier. "Are we so like women, either of us, that you could not discover the cheat, when you saw two foolish girls dressed out in our clothes? Oh, it makes my blood boil when I think of it! Let somebody take that beast there," he added, pointing

to Tronsebours, "and pump dirty water over him till he awakes; and the rest of you mount and follow me. Give me the light!" and he snatched it from the hands of Almeric Talybois as he spoke, and rushed past them to his dressing-chamber.

"Two clever wenches, on my soul!" said Almeric to himself, and biting his lips to avoid laughing. "But go," he added aloud to the wondering men-at-arms, "and get your horses ready—lose not a minute."

The men went as desired, and Le Boutelier re-appeared, having replaced, in much less time than usual, the missing articles of his attire, and conquered the agitation which had formerly made him almost frantic. He was now calm, as he generally appeared; he minced his words, and spoke slowly and softly, but he walked hastily, and mounted his steed with the quickness of a man upon whose motions life or death depended.

It was their halloo, and the clatter of their horses' hoofs, that broke upon the ears of the fugitives, and filled them with alarm. It was a beautifully clear night; the moon shone with such brilliancy that every object was almost as distinct as at noon-day. What to do they knew not. Could they but reach the borders of the forest that extended to within about a mile of the castle of Willenden, they might be safe, and they had already traversed more than half the distance. Terror lent speed to their feet, although Friedolinda and Marian were sadly clogged by the heavy boots of the cavaliers. They dared not look behind, and every instant the shouts of their pursuers appeared to sound louder and louder. Friedolinda and Marian gasped for breath, and simultaneously declared they could go no further.

"Then, by heaven! I must carry you!" said the gleeman. "If you like to be caught and taken back again, I do not. The embraces of Le Boutelier and Almeric Talybois would not do you quite so much harm as their swords would me; and as I cannot leave you behind, I must e'en carry you."

The stout old man caught Marian in his arms, and bore her along with as much ease as if she had been a child; and Friedolinda, stronger than her sister, and inspired by a deeper dread, set forth again with renovated energies. The horsemen, however, rapidly advanced upon them, but still they kept on their way, panting, terror-stricken, and losing ground at every step. They at last gained the covert of the trees, and the gleeman, followed by Friedolinda, struck into the midst of a thick underwood, where the horses could not follow them. The voice of Le Boutelier was now heard, as they came to a stand still, ordering the archers to discharge their arrows at the

fugitives, if they did not immediately stop. To this threat, however, they paid no attention, and Le Boutelier and Almeric Talybois dismounted and jumped into the brushwood after them, followed by all the men-at-arms, except one, who was left behind to take care of the horses.

The gleeman took a whistle from his bosom, and blew a shrill blast that echoed and echoed again amid the silent recesses of the wood.

"Our friends must be near," he said, in an encouraging tone; "I know they must, or they could not have sent their messenger last night into the castle. We can keep these fellows at bay for a little while. Here, get behind these trees, girls, and use your swords as well as you can. I'll be a match for that flimsy knight and Almeric Talybois combined. Do you manage the rest between you."

"Oh, merciful God, protect us!" said Friedolinda. "See, my poor sister has fainted away—save yourself, and leave us to our fate, for there is no help!"

The gleeman blew his whistle again, and immediately it was answered by a similar sound. The old man almost leaped a foot into the air with joy as he heard it, and Marian, well-nigh exhausted with fatigue and terror, revived at the sound.

They were now face to face with their pursuers, and all the rage of Le Boutelier was rekindled, as he looked upon the gleeman. He was so frantic that he could not speak, but his cheeks grew deadly pale and his lips quivered. Each prepared to strike, and the two sisters crouched behind a tree, when suddenly more than two score of men came running up on every side of them, in green suits, and armed with bows and arrows.

"How now, John-o'-the-Dingle! what have we here?" said one of them, a hard-featured fierce-looking man, with but one eye, and who carried a cross-bow of unusual magnitude. "Ha! Sir William Le Boutelier!" he exclaimed, as that one savage eye caught sight of the countenance of the Norman, "then the day of my revenge is come! On lads—to the rescue!"

The new comer was the redoubtable Tom-o'-the-Yew, the best marksman and the strongest man in the forests of Kent, and who nourished the bitterest hatred against William Le Boutelier. Many a buck had he slain, which the Lord of Willenden claimed as his own; and more than once had he fallen into the hands of that chief, and suffered punishment for transgressing the forest laws. The first time, he had been dismissed with the loss of his ears, and the second time, his eye had been bored out with a red-hot gimlet. This barbarous punishment had well-nigh brought the strong man to

the grave, but he recovered, and vowed in his secret soul to take a bloody vengeance, should he ever have the opportunity. He became the terror of that part of the country—slew more of the king's and William Le Boutelier's deer than any twenty Saxons besides, and never once forgot, during the five years that elapsed, the vow he had sworn. And this was the first time that he and Le Boutelier had met since his cruel mutilation, and his remaining eye sparkled with a furious satisfaction when he beheld his enemy.

Le Boutelier, on his part, knew his man, and as Tom-o'-the-Yew sprang towards him with a savage yell, he drew his sword to defend his life from one who, he was sure, would prove no common opponent. In less than a minute the conflict became general. John-o'-the-Dingle engaged Almeric Talybois, and the men-at-arms of Willenden were at the same time attacked by double their numbers of the foresters.

The sisters, in their masculine attire, peeped from behind a tree upon the struggle with the most intense and painful curiosity, without power to move from the spot. So absorbed were they in contemplation of the scene, that they did not hear the shrill whistle that again resounded, as if from every side of the forest, nor hear the sound of men advancing.

"Hold!" suddenly exclaimed a loud clear voice, that rose above the tumult of the battle; and the next moment Bryan Brownabuskin himself stepped into the midst of the fray. The foresters dropped their weapons—John-o'-the-Dingle let go his hold of Almeric Talybois, whose sword he had wrested from his grasp, and all paused, uncertain what to do, except Tom-o'-the-Yew and Sir William Le Boutelier. Tom-o'-the-Yew looked for an instant to see who caused the interruption, and then continued, without further observation of aught around him—but the one sole object—to aim his thrusts at the heart of his opponent. Le Boutelier lost breath—he fought with the energy of desperation—and light and agile as he was, often seemed to gain the advantage over his heavier adversary. He continually endeavoured to get at the dark side of him, but Tom-o'-the-Yew observed his manœuvre, and cautiously thwarted him, whenever it was attempted. Bryan Fitzosbert had not time to renew his command, and if he had, he would not have been obeyed, and the fierce conflict still continued, when he for the first time caught sight of the beloved face of Marian Jordan. She had uttered a faint shriek as she heard his voice, and stepping from her hiding-place, she tore off the disguising cap and mantle of Roger de Tronsebours, and shone forth a vision of beauty upon the wondering eyes of the foresters. In an instant she was clasped in the hunter's arms;—the next, Friedolinda received a similar em-

brace from William Longbeard, who arrived on the scene of strife, followed by Jordan the tanner, Robert de Robaulx, Nicholas Bamme, and the Londoners. In much less time than it would take to narrate them, questions were asked and answered—warm embraces given and received, and the whole of the circumstances explained to the eager ears of the father and the lovers. Jordan the tanner wept for joy.—He clasped one of his daughters to his bosom with each arm, and kissed them alternately, over and over again, until he observed that Bamme was looking at him; when he let them go, and dashed the tears from his eyes, and tried to look composed and dignified. But it would not do—the effort was vain, and the old man was fairly conquered by his emotions, and sobbed aloud.

But while this scene took place, Le Boutelier still fought for his life. Unobserved, the combatants had gradually chased each other to a more remote part of the forest, where none heeded, or could see them. Le Boutelier, almost exhausted with the long struggle, succeeded in supporting his back against a tree, and in this position continued for some minutes to parry the deadly thrusts aimed at him by the strong forester. Reduced thus to act upon the defensive, he saw that he must make some more vigorous effort, or succumb; and springing nimbly to one side, he avoided a blow aimed directly at his heart, and the sword of Tom-o'-the-Yew struck violently against the tree, and was shivered to pieces. Le Boutelier had now the advantage—the moon shone upon his back, and full in the face of his foe, and while Tom-o'-the-Yew yet staggered from the force of his own thrust against the tree, and before he had time to recover his perfect equilibrium, the sword of Le Boutelier passed through his side. The rage of the forester allowed him to feel no pain, and he rushed at Le Boutelier, collecting all his strength for the death-blow. He closed with him in an instant, and seizing his arm, strove with all his might to wrench the weapon from his hand. The small delicate wrist of Le Boutelier was well-nigh crushed beneath the ponderous grasp that held it like a vice, as they wrestled for an instant together.

“Yield, Sir William Le Boutelier!” said Tom-o'-the-Yew, as the blood flowed from his wounded side, and as he gazed with savage energy in the face of his foe; “thou hast been a tougher morsel than I thought to find thee—but thou must yield!”

“Never—to a false thief like thee!” replied Le Boutelier again struggling with his opponent.

“Die, then!” said the forester, suddenly letting go his hold of the sword, and plunging a dagger to the hilt in the bosom

of the Norman, "die—my revenge is satisfied—and I follow thee!"

Le Boutelier fell heavily to the ground without a groan, and Tom-o'-the-Yew stood for an instant, and looked him fixedly in the face, while something like a smile stole over his own grim and haggard countenance. It was but for a moment. He had received his own death-stroke, and faint from the loss of blood, he staggered and reeled, and then fell with a groan upon the body of his foe. Le Boutelier moved not—breathed not—he had gone to his final account, and the blood of both mingled together on the sward beneath. In this state they were found a few minutes afterwards, by a party of the foresters, whom Bryan Fitzosbert, suddenly perceiving that they had disappeared, had dispatched in search of them. Tom-o'-the-Yew still breathed; he was conscious, too, when his companions bent over and lifted his head in their arms.

"Is he dead?" were the only words that he uttered; and they were spoken in so faint a voice as to be scarcely audible.

"Quite dead!" said the forester who was nearest to him; and a grim smile again lit up the sunken and fading eye of Tom-o'-the-Yew, as he heard the answer.

"And you—how do you feel?" said the forester, endeavouring to stanch the blood that still poured from his wound.

"I am going," replied he; pray for me—but I die satisfied."

"Thou shalt not die this time, Tom," said the forester.

There was no word—not even a look, in reply, and the man bent down and put his hand over the mouth, and found that the assurance had been uttered too late. The breath had fled from the body, and the Spirit had returned to him who gave it, with a murder to answer for—and that murder, not only unrepented of, but exulted in.

"He's gone, poor fellow!" said the forester to his companions; "let us return and tell the issue."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Under the greenwood-tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note,
Unto the sweet bird's throat;—
Come hither—come hither—come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE intelligence of the death of Sir William Le Boutelier affected differently every member of the group. Bryan Fitz-

osbert was sorry—but he was much more sorry for the loss of Tom-o'-the-Yew. Longbeard was grieved and shocked—and even Jordan the tanner felt a gloom upon his spirits. Marian, though she despised the man, could have wept for his untimely fate—but Friedolinda felt more deeply than them all. She could not weep for him—she uttered no word of sorrow: but there came a weight upon her heart, as she reflected upon the suddenness of the blow—and remembered how full of life and youth, and passion, was the man, a few short minutes ago, who now lay cold and stiff upon the sward.

———— “Unanointed, unaneal'd,
No reckoning made, but sent to his account
With all his imperfections on his head.”

She reproached herself too, with being, in some manner, the cause of his death;—but this feeling was transient—and she was compelled to acknowledge that he had brought his fate upon himself by his own violence. But, nevertheless, she could have wished it had been otherwise, and she caught herself sighing even for Le Boutelier. Death had wiped off his errors and his crimes, or at least weakened the recollection of them: and she thought of him as one who, but perhaps for loving her, certainly neither well nor wisely, might have run a happier career, and distinguished himself as much by his virtues as he had done by his vices. But he was gone—his chance was cut off—he had perished in his bloom, and in his folly, and men would look upon his face no more. Longbeard scarcely felt less—it was his wish to have escaped all violence—to have obeyed the king's behest in this respect, and to have made Le Boutelier an example and a warning to his fellows, that the law could not be outraged with impunity, while there was a wise king to administer it. But this hope was destroyed; the violent man had come to a violent end; and the insulted majesty of the law was not to be vindicated by his legal punishment. Bryan Fitzosbert shared none of these thoughts; and while they were rapidly passing over the mind of his brother, he was giving such directions as the emergency required. He had ordered Almeric Talybois, and his men-at-arms, to be set at liberty, and left the corpse of their friend and leader at their disposal. A party of the foresters, with the gleeman at their head, removed the body of Tom-o'-the Yew, that they might bury it on the morrow, after the hunter fashion.

Almeric Talybois and his men disappeared with as much celerity as possible, without exchanging a word with any of the party of the foresters, afraid that, if they delayed, the formidable Brownbuskin might change his mind, and order

them to be detained. They covered the corpse of Le Boute-
lier with a cloak, and placing it on his horse, galloped back to
the castle of Willenden, in gloom and in silence. The warden
wring his hands, as the extent of the calamity was made known
to him; the retainers of the castle gathered about the corpse,
and Robert de Gonys, now lord of Willenden, vowed, in the
presence of them all, to have justice for the murder of his
relative. But there was no sorrow among them all—no,
not even a shade of it; and the man who affected the most
felt the least, and that was the new lord. A glorious prospect
had suddenly opened out before him. He—the flatterer and
the toady, was now to become the god of inferior men's
idolatry, and to receive the incense which he had formerly
offered up at the shrine of another. He could scarcely be-
lieve that one short hour had made such a change in his
prospects—he had never dared to hope such a consummation;
for his late relative was young, and full of life, and well in-
clined to marry and perpetuate his race. But now, *he* was
lord—the little man had become great—the waiter upon for-
tune had become master of her gifts—the man who cringed
and crept, stood upright—the slave was lord in his own right,
and a tyranny, as fierce as his former slavery was abject, en-
tered into his soul.

After the first shock caused by the deed of bloodshed was
over, happily passed the hours of Friedolinda and Marian.
They were restored to those they loved best—they had
escaped from a thralldom too horrible to be borne, and the
world once more seemed beautiful to their eyes, and the
future all smiling before them. Longbeard, too, was happier
than ever he had been in his life, and gazed upon the face of
his Friedolinda with a joy all the more intense, from his
recent sorrow. Bryan was in the highest spirits, when once
he had assembled them all in the rude tent which his men
had in a few hours erected for them amid the thick recesses
of the forest; and Marian's bright face beamed with such
pleasure when he spoke to her, that old Jordan the tanner
saw that it would be of no use to talk to her any more of
Robert de Robaulx. By sunrise on the following morning,
they were all on their route towards Blean woods, the usual
abode of Bryan, and where he had accommodation fit to
receive them. At his earnest request, the whole party, in-
cluding Nicholas Bamme and his tanners and armorers of
London, were induced to spend a few days with him, and in
the meantime matters might be arranged with Jordan relative
to the future disposal of his daughter Marian.

The father, when the first transports of his joy for the re-
covery of his children had subsided, and when he had over

and over again expressed, in rough but eloquent language, his deep gratitude to the gleeman for the share he had had in their rescue, discovered that he had regained them only to lose them. The herald had taken an early opportunity to speak with him in private, and had formally renounced all claim to the hand of Marian, "for the best of all reasons," said he, "that neither of them had a heart to bestow upon the other."

"I tell thee frankly, friend De Robaulx," replied the tanner, "I am very sorry—not that I fear that she will not get as good, or even a better husband than thou wouldst have been, but that her new lover is too ardent and impatient for me, and will want to marry her immediately. If she had consented to take thee, I could have made her wait for a year or two, for she is but a child yet; but this Bryan Brownbuskin is one of your men who will not brook delay, and he has actually asked my consent to marry her to-morrow. 'No—no,' said I, 'Master Brownbuskin; we city folks are not in such a tremendous hurry in these matters, and I can't part with her just yet.' The other, too, will soon be leaving me, and what shall I do? I might as well die at once, as be left to go down to the grave alone in this manner. I succeeded in putting him off for a time, but I know he will be at me again," continued the tanner, "and that they mean to rob me of both my children. Thou, De Robaulx, wouldst not have been so pressing."

"Ay! but I would though," said the herald, "had Marian been as kind as she was beautiful. But let people say what they will, the love that is all on one side soon cools. There's no fire in a flint if the steel will not strike it."

"Ah well!" said the tanner, "I have made up my mind; I will not consent for a twelvemonth, and shall return with both Friedolinda and Marian to London, as soon as possible. I am tired of these wild woods which people talk of so much—I see no pleasure in wandering about over the wet grass, and tearing my clothes and my flesh too with thorns and brambles. And as for hunting, I take no delight in it; and I am surprised, De Robaulx, that a man of your sense should give up your city office and follow such a vagabond life. Is it not better to go with your money in your pocket, peaceably and comfortably to the butcher's, and buy your venison, than to run after the live animal at the risk of your neck? The town for me—London-bridge is a finer sight than I have clapped eyes on since I left it."

"Marian does not think so," replied the herald, as the worthy tanner, with a rueful countenance, thus detailed his

woes to his patient listener; "she talks all day of the beauties and delights of the wild wood."

"The more's the pity," said the tanner, with a groan; "the wild wood is for wild men, and they have no more notion of proper handicraft here, than the bucks they go in chase of. If I had but a dozen of them in Bermondsey, what capital tanners I would make of them!"

"Now really and truly," said De Robaulx, with a very serious and dogmatical look, "do you mean to pretend that the woods have no advantages?"

"Not one!" said the tanner, firmly.

"That the smell of the wild chestnut trees, wafted on the morning air, is not preferable to the odours of your tanyard?"

"The smell of the flowers may be all very well now and then," replied the tanner, "but not for a constancy. Nothing weakens you so much as these faint odours; whereas, the perfumes of a tanyard are good at all times. Who ever heard of a tanner dying of the plague? eh! Why man, he lives amid a perpetual virtue of smells, and no infection dares to come near him. Wild chestnuts indeed—pooh!"

"Well, well," said De Robaulx, giving up the point; "every man to his liking—so the woods for me."

"Longbeard is the only sensible man among you," continued the tanner; "he knows the virtues of a town, and I warrant you he will not be very eager to stay many days here. No, no—all the world are not fools, if you are, Messire Robert de Robaulx. Egad! I begin to rejoice that Marian will not have you. You're as bad as Brownbuskin—and the more's the pity."

It was a recent conversation with Nicholas Bamme that had rendered the good tanner so peculiarly averse to remain in the country. These congenial spirits had determined to return at the first opportunity, and had endeavoured to persuade Longbeard to shorten his stay with his brother, and proceed with them to London. Longbeard wanted no persuasion. Having recovered his lost Friedolinda, he was more anxious to return than they were; and indeed, never would have quitted the capital for a cause less powerful than that which actually induced him. There was much which he had begun, and which now was the time to complete. He knew that his enemies would profit by his absence to injure him in the royal estimation, and he was desirous to afford them no opportunity of ruining either himself, or the dear cause he lived for. He longed to offer himself to the king,—to aid him with thousands of devoted hearts, in the re-establishment of

his rule, wherever it was threatened by the machinations of Prince John; and to show him that his Saxon people would prove a surer bulwark around his throne, than the Norman aristocracy—each man in his own neighbourhood as proud and powerful as a king, and little inclined to obey any laws but such as suited his own passions, interests, or convenience. He could not, however, return immediately, as Bryan implored him so earnestly to remain a few days, and as his solicitations were seconded by the still more powerful entreaties of Friedolinda.

Truth to say, Bryan was averse that he should return at all, and hoped to persuade him to abandon the ambitious plans that he had formed in London, and lead a life of rough philosophy in the country. And Bryan was something of a philosopher in his way. With wealth sufficient for all his moderate wants, he sought for no luxuries; and though branded as a robber, he never considered himself one, nor indeed did any of the Saxons, whose good opinion alone he cared for. He thought it no robbery to kill the king's deer, or William Le Boutelier's, and his offences were confined to breaches of the forest laws. He loved the chase and the country; hated the confined streets, impure air, and all the sports and pastimes of cities; and thought he was more independent in the forests than he could be anywhere else. He could not imagine how any man of free choice could exist in a town, when the country was all before him where to choose; and although he certainly sympathized much with the wrongs of the London Saxons, and wished his brother success in his schemes for their benefit, he thought that brother would be a wiser man, if he came to the woods. "He would eat well, drink well, and sleep well, if he did," thought he to himself, "and add forty years to his life." The sallow cheek, the sunken eye, and the heavy heart, were for those who toiled in cities in schemes of aggrandizement, either for themselves or others; but the ruddy countenance, and the bright eye, and the happy heart, were for those who were content when the wants of each day were satisfied, who breathed the pure air, looked daily upon the loveliness of nature, and like the miller of the old song, "cared for nobody, if nobody cared for him."

Longbeard, Bryan, Jordan, and his fair daughters, the herald, and Nicholas Bamme, sat, on the third day, around the hospitable board of the hunter, who had just stated to his brother his opinions upon these and various other matters, and concluded by asking him to remain amongst them.

"You may be right in your notions as regards yourself," replied Longbeard; "every man who comes into this world,

and every woman too, has a task to perform, and has talents given to perform it duly. Your task is here—mine is elsewhere, and I must fulfil it. It is easy, in these secluded forests, to stand up for the old English laws of Edward the Confessor, whenever you find the modern tyranny press too grievously upon you; and you are, no doubt, a happier man than I. But as mine is a more difficult, so is it a nobler mission; and I will perform it.”

“Yes, and get no thanks for it, and die in the attempt, perhaps,” said Brownbuskin.

“I seek no thanks,” replied Longbeard. “And what if I die, as you predict? Is there no glory to die in a good cause? Is it nothing to be remembered by after ages as the benefactor of your race? You cannot understand these feelings: you live for the present—I for the future.”

“For shame! William Longbeard, to own it with so beautiful a bride at your elbow. Canst thou not, Friedolinda, persuade him to live for himself and for thee? He speaks not as a true lover *should* speak.”

A shade of sorrow, deeper than was wont to dwell there, passed over the countenance of Longbeard, as he looked into the eyes of Friedolinda, to see what expression was there. They were turned kindly upon him, and his face brightened again as he thought he could see that she loved him all the better for the cause he had undertaken.

Bryan thought so too, for he immediately added—“But I will not appeal to her; you are both alike—the same hope—the same enthusiasm. I only wish you may not repent, when it is too late, that you did not take my advice, and never more set face in that ungrateful city. Power, quotha! I can exercise more power in one little hour here, than you could in a month in London; and believe me, the rascally mob of that vile place would just as soon hoot you as they would cheer you. You were their idol yesterday—who knows if you are their idol to-day? Why, they tear the man to pieces on Tuesday whom they worshipped on Monday.”

“It may be so,” said Longbeard, “for they are ignorant. My mission is to teach them; they will not act thus when they are wise.”

“When the moon’s made of green cheese, I believe they will mend, but not before,” said Bryan. “No, no; if you want sense and gratitude you must look for them in the woods. Ha! what say’st thou, John-o’-the-Dingle?” he added, as at that moment the gleeman entered.

“There’s sense enough everywhere,” replied the gleeman, “but as for gratitude, it’s all breath, fog, vapour, smoke, mist, and wind; there’s as much in cities as in forests, and as

much in forests as in cities; and all you can find in either might be packed up in a bladder, and you might open it, and find nothing after all. The most I've ever seen was in 'Tom-o'-the-Yew, and he was as revengeful as he was grateful; but he's dead now, poor fellow."

"Well, if thou wert an enemy of mine, instead of my best friend, as thou art, and I wanted an excuse for fighting thee, I would tell thee that thou lied in saying that the men of the woods had no gratitude, and we would fight upon that."

"Thou wouldst lose the day," replied the gleeman, "and we would be fighting about a shadow; and if I do fight, I will fight for a substance, as I did the other day, when I fought for the tanner's daughters. But I have some news to tell you, which will interest you more than this idle gossip."

"Sit thee down, man, and tell us what it is," said Bryan.

"Why," replied the gleeman, "it does not concern us so much as it does your brother and his friends; and after all it may be worth little; but such as it is you shall have it. I got it all from thy devoted slave and tender lover, my pretty Marian, and he hopes the elixir will work well yet."

"I'll crack that fellow's head the first time I meet with him," said Bryan, "if he dares even to think of Marian, much less to speak of her. I'll bruise him into a powder, and scatter him over a dunghill!"

"He'll keep out of your way, I'll be sworn," said the gleeman, laughing, "for I've frightened him so much that he fears to walk abroad. The very tip of his nose turned pale with terror, though he blustered all the while."

"And who is the man?" said Longbeard, who had not heard the story.

"Oh, an ass of a fellow—one De Tronsebours—a fool, a braggart, and a coward—with a piggish eye, and a nose of copper, and who is occasionally sober. He fancies himself in love with the pretty Marian, who, by-the-bye, owes me a kiss," continued the gleeman, "for rescuing her from his foul clutches. This fellow aided Sir William Le Boutelier in carrying Friedolinda and Marian from London; and he aided me also in getting them away again;" and the gleeman told the whole story—how he had duped him with the elixir—how he had sent him into a deep sleep with a powerful opiate—and how awkwardly Marian walked in his heavy jack-boots, through the various courts of the castle. He added, that he had found an opportunity to renew his intercourse with him, and related how he had once more lulled his rising suspicions, and persuaded him that Marian was languishing for love of him.

"I wish you had not told him that," said Bryan, seeing

that Marian's face was covered with blushes at the very thought; "there was no use in that."

"Yes, there was," replied the gleeman; "I got into his confidence by it, which I could not otherwise have done; and I learned that De Gonys and Almeric Talybois started yesterday morning for London, to lay a complaint before the king, in person, that Sir William Le Boutelier was murdered by a party of men under the command of William Longbeard and Bryan Brownbuskin;—that is my news."

"'Tis of little worth then," said Bryan; "who cares for the lies they tell?—they cannot injure me."

"But," said Longbeard, turning suddenly pale, "they can injure me, much; and this news is of great importance. Oh that I had gone to London immediately, and forestalled these slanderers! But it may not yet be too late—and I shall return to London this very hour."

"Why, I think you had better," said the gleeman, "for your enemies are at work, and are setting the people against you. There is one Doctor Abra Ben Acadabra outside, selling medicines to some stout hunters who were never ill in their lives;—he has just come from London, not knowing that you were here, and brings news, which is not of the very best, as far as you are concerned. You must either depart soon, or stay altogether."

"Oh, stay!" interposed Marian; and then, turning to her sister, she added—"plead with him—implore him—he will be safe here! There is no danger to threaten him in the woods, and you will both be happy."

Friedolinda pressed her sister kindly by the hand, and bending down her cheek till it met Marian's, whispered to her, that no entreaty would avail; and Longbeard, as his look caught her's, read what was passing in her soul, and was grateful for it.

The gleeman, who had gone out, returned at this instant with Abra Ben Acadabra. The quack entered with a step of great dignity and solemnity, and with a face of business made a low bow successively to each person present. He unslung his pack from his shoulders, and placing it upon the table, exposed to their view a formidable array of medications, of all shapes, sizes, and colours.

"Fine healing salve—fine healing salve!" he began, with great volubility—"for arrow or spear wounds—of a most marvellous virtue, and very cheap. Will you buy—will you buy?"

"We don't want thy medicines, friend," said Longbeard, "but thy news."

"Oh, but you won't pay for news," said the quack. "I

have a potent elixir here, which cures all diseases;—earach, toothach, headach, stomachach, and the heartach. Ha! my pretty maidens,” he added, as his glance fell upon the sisters, “I have some true-love cakes for you—and charms innumerable—will you buy—will you buy?”

“I’ll tell thee what it is, friend,” said Longbeard, interrupting, “we do not want thy medicines—but, nevertheless, we’ll expend some money with thee, presently—but tell us thy news. When didst thou leave London?”

“Yesterday, at noon,” said the quack. “But you must want something—though you may be well to-day, you may be ill to-morrow;—this is for wounds of sharp instruments,” said he, holding up a packet—“and this for the stings of serpents, and venomous animals,” holding up another—“and this, more precious than all—will preserve you from devils and witches—won’t you buy?”

“There,” said Longbeard, with a forced look of resignation, that concealed, however, a very great deal of impatience, “I’ll buy half your pack, if you will but answer my questions;—there! give me your powders!—and here’s the money for them.”

The quack looked at the coin on both sides, and drawing a leather purse from his bosom, put them carefully into it, and handed his various packets to the purchaser.

“Leave me to manage him,” said Longbeard, who saw that his brother was losing patience, as well as he—“and now,” he added, turning to the quack, “what is the last news in London?”

“Ill news travel fast enough,” replied the quack, “and I did not wish to spoil my bargains, by telling you before we had dealt together. The high justiciary has made formal complaint to the king, in council, of the mayor of London, Fitzalwyne, and accused him of being a weak and unworthy magistrate, under whose rule London has been for a long period a scene of riot and bloodshed.”

“Well, and what then?”

“The king, who has much confidence in Fitzalwyne, summoned him to appear before the council, to answer for his conduct;—he went accordingly.”

“And the result?”

“Why, the result was, that William Fitzosbert, commonly called Longbeard, was summoned to appear within four-and-twenty hours, and answer for his treasons, murders, and various other offences, under pain of outlawry and excommunication. I heard the proclamation made myself.”

“I will surrender!” said Longbeard, firmly; “I fear no-

thing—my cause is just; and neither murder nor treason lies at my door.”

“But the time is past,” said Abra Ben Acadabra; “you are outlawed and excommunicated already.”

“There must be some mistake in that,” replied Longbeard.

“No, there is not,” repeated the quack; “and now you have my news. I could tell you no more in a week; and you,” he added, making up to Bryan and Jordan, “will you buy nothing? I have sovereign remedies for burns, scalds, bruises, cuts, aches, spasms,—”

“Go to the devil!” said Bryan, “and don’t pester me.”

“Talking of him,” said the quack, unmoved, “I have a charm against him, and very cheap—only three marks.”

“John-o’-the-Dingle, you brought this magpie here—can you not rid us of him?” said Bryan.

“I’ll give him some ale and venison,” said John; “he won’t talk so fast with his mouth full. This way, Doctor Abra Ben Acadabra—this way; there’s some of the choicest ale you ever tasted outside, which our fellows are drinking of. Come along!” and he pulled him by the sleeve towards the door, as he spoke.

The quack suffered himself to be led to the door, and making a very solemn obeisance to every one present, went out with the gleeman, and soon forgot his bargains in the potency of the malt.

CHAPTER XXIX.

“Oh Lord, what is thys worldys blysse,
That changeth as the moone?
My somer’s day, in lusty May,
Is darked before the noone.

“I here you say—farewell—nay—nay,
We depart not so sone,
What say you so—wheder will ye go—
Alas! what have ye done?”

The Nut-brown Maid.

LONGBEARD’S resolution was taken immediately, and the tanner insisted upon accompanying him to London, and taking his two daughters with him. In vain Bryan urged the danger and the want of necessity for such a step; but both Longbeard and Jordan were deaf to all his arguments.

“Granted that it be necessary you should go,” said Bryan to his brother, “though I fear you are but running your head against peril, why should Jordan take these fair flowers back into that rude soil, and amid the storms that are sure to

blow around you for a time, when they can be safe here, and happy too?"

"It is of no use talking," said Jordan; "I am weary of the woods, and I hate them! Besides, my tanyard will go to ruin, if I remain longer. My daughters cannot remain without me, and they do not wish it; and I will not see William Fitzosbert in danger, without being by his side. So I am resolved."

"I thank you, Jordan," said Longbeard, kindly; "though my enemies deprive me even of my good name, they cannot deprive me of your friendship. There's hope in the world yet—and there are thousands of such hearts in London, who will not see me wronged. The king, too, will prove my friend; so I will not fear. And yet I wish," he added, in a more tremulous tone, all his confidence forsaking him, as he looked into the mild face of Friedolinda, "I wish for thy sake that thou couldst remain in some quiet spot, surrounded by friends who love thee, until this tempest has passed away—until I vindicate my name and my cause. I fear for thee, in London."

"Where could I be better?" replied Friedolinda, "than in my father's house? You—even you," she added, turning her full bright eyes upon his face, her own glowing with earnestness and enthusiasm, "you do not know me yet—you think me a poor, weak-minded girl, unfit for the struggles of life. But you do me wrong, Fitzosbert; I can endure—I can suffer, and still hope on. You will want some one to condole with you when the evil days come. You will want some heart to confide your griefs to—why not to mine? And when at last you triumph, as I know you will, how proud shall I be to think that, in the dark day, I did not forsake you."

Longbeard was not the man to weep either for sorrow or for joy; but there was an unusual moisture on his eye-lashes as Friedolinda spoke. He thought she had never looked so beautiful before; and a melancholy happiness (there is no contradiction in the words) sunk into his heart, as each word fell upon his ear; and he was deeply grateful that the clouds of fate, gather as black and as thick as they might, could not obscure the one bright star that shone upon him.

Bryan, who had been whispering, apparently, in deep and earnest converse with Marian, suddenly arose, and drew the tanner aside.

"Since you must go," said he, "and take your daughters with you, I will go too. I hate London a thousand times worse than it is possible you can hate the forests; but I love

your daughter dearer than my life ; and she loves me, too, I believe, for she has sworn it a hundred times."

"The very reason you should disbelieve her," replied the tanner. "What business has such a little flirt as that to love anybody but me?"

"I dare say you will be very loath to part with her ; she is no doubt the joy of your household—but she must marry some day, you know, and you must resign yourself to it. Do so, then, with a good grace."

"Not for a twelve month," said the tanner, resolutely.

"Say six months?" said Bryan.

"No, twelve months—she is young yet. I may be selfish, but I can't help it. Dark will be my old age without her."

"Heaven help me, then !" said Bryan ; "I will live in your very tanyard for her sake if you will but make her mine, and then you may see her every day. But no more of this now ; I will go with you to London, and before I leave it, I'll have your promise, on the faith of a Saxon, that Marian shall be mine. I'll not stir till the day is named."

"But I have not talked with the minx on the matter," said the father. "In the meantime, however, I see no reason why you should not come to London, if you like. You would alter your opinion of it if you would but live there a week. A month of it, and you would never return to these chilly, uncomfortable woods again. I must make a Londoner of you ere you marry my daughter."

"We shall see about that hereafter," said Brownbuskin, with a smile which the tanner could not interpret, but which meant, nevertheless, that he might attempt any impossible thing, with as much chance of success, as to make a Londoner of him. They shook hands, however, with much cordiality, and the journey to the capital was agreed upon. Friedolinda and Marian took a kind farewell of the gleeman, who insisted on a kiss from Marian as a reward for the trouble he had had with her. Longbeard and the tanner also expressed, in the warmest terms, their gratitude for the service he had done them ; and Jordan went so far as to offer him a home in his house for the remainder of his days. To this proposal, however, the gleeman would not listen ; and he swore that the tanner had a design upon him, and wanted to shorten his life by cooping him up in a city.

"Well, you'll come sometimes," said the tanner ; "and as long as there's a coin in my pocket, or a crust on my shelf, you shall share it. So farewell, John-o'-the-Dingle, and God bless you !"

Early the following morning, the whole party were in motion

towards Whitstable, where the "Friedolinda" rode at anchor, awaiting the return of its master. The party included the tanner and his daughters; the two latter mounted on quiet nags, which Brownbuskin had taken care to provide for them, Longbeard, Bryan himself, Nicholas Bamme and his Londoners, Robert de Robaulx, and two or three foresters whom Brownbuskin took with him to be useful in case of necessity.

CHAPTER XXX.

"*Sicinius*.—Hear me, people!—peace!

Citizens.—Let's hear our tribune! peace! speak! speak!

Sicinius.—You are at point to lose your liberties!"

Coriolanus.

LONGBEARD and his party arrived at the tanner's wharf in Bermondsey at a late hour on the evening after their departure from Whitstable, and as he did not know, after the rumours that had reached him, what danger or difficulty he might experience in entering London, he determined to remain at Bermondsey with Nicholas Bamme and his men until the following day, when he might make inquiries. Bamme started various objections to pass the night in such a place, on account of the evil odours of tanning; but they were easily removed by the promise of abundant liquor to counteract the ill effects he dreaded. Jordan and his daughters, escorted by Bryan Fitzosbert, proceeded to the citizen's house on the bridge, where the serving wench Bertha, and the apprentice Gideon, kept each other in doleful countenance during the absence of their master and young mistresses—Bertha passing away the weary time in relating, and Gideon in listening to, sad stories of ghosts and witches, robbery and murder. In this lugubrious amusement they were agreeably surprised by Jordan's return, and their faces brightened up as they saw that Friedolinda and Marian were both with him. The boy Gideon, in whose eyes Friedolinda was not only the most important, but the most beautiful and gentle of created beings, set about waiting upon her with an uncouth but most zealous gallantry, and was amply rewarded by the kind smiles she gave him. Bertha herself, more inured to the hardships of life, and with a heart more ossified by age and selfishness, shared the gladness of the boy at the sight of Marian, and embraced her as she would a child that had been lost and newly found again. Bryan was not at all pleased; he thought so ugly a hag should not press her lips against the ripe ones of Marian, and was actually jealous of a woman. Of course he could say nothing,

but was heartily glad when the salutation was over and saw no further chance of its renewal.

Jordan sat in his comfortable arm-chair, a happier man than he had been for many a day. When a cheerful fire was lighted—when his dog had come for its caress, and had stretched its limbs in the heat—and when his daughters sat one on each side of him, and showed him every now and then those little attentions which age is always so pleased to receive from youth, and more especially from youth and beauty—he thought to himself that he had never known what true pleasure was until that moment.

“Now,” said he to Bryan, who sat as near as he could to Marian, “now I feel that my home is indeed a home. A few days ago I hated the very sight of the walls; the chairs on which my daughters had sat, and the tables at which they had worked, were like so many ghosts, each telling me what I had lost. I could not stay in the place at last, but ran out of it as if there had been a plague in it.”

“I believe you,” replied Bryan.

“There is but one thing troubles me now,” said the tanner, “and that is, the rumour about Longbeard. What do they mean, I should like to know, by their heresy, and their treasons, and their excommunication of an innocent man? I’ll go to the king myself to-morrow, and learn the rights of it. A pleasant sort of a man he is,” said the tanner, “and had heard of me too.”

“Ah,” said Friedolinda, “and what has he heard of you?”

“Why, that I was a discontented knave,” replied the tanner.

“Well, but, father,” said Marian, smiling with Friedolinda at the answer, “don’t you think he had much better not have heard of you at all, than have heard such a false character of you?”

“Oh, but I showed him that it was false,” said the tanner; “I made him see his error, ay, and confess it, too, and his own mother told him I was a true man. And so I am,” he continued. “I don’t deny that I have stood up against the injustice that we poor Saxons have suffered during his absence, and so I will to my dying day. And I know, if he be not ill-advised, that this will rather recommend me to his favour than injure me in his opinion. And, Friedolinda, my girl, now that I remember it, he said he would give me an order for hides to make saddles for him! I’ll go see what I can do for Longbeard to-morrow.”

“Take my advice, and keep quiet,” said Bryan. “I will go about the city to-morrow, and learn the state of matters,

and what crime my brother is accused of. I am sorry, however, that his enemy has had the start of him."

"Who?" inquired the tanner.

"Why, Fitzalwyne, who has sworn never to rest until he has worked his downfall. Has not my brother been a more powerful man in the city than he? Has he not forced him more than once to revoke his unjust decisions? And has he not made it evident to all the Saxons of London, that as long as Fitzalwyne is mayor, there can be no hope of justice between the Normans and the Saxons, except the latter show a bold front, and keep this man in awe? These are things that are not to be forgiven. Besides, he cannot forget that his house was burned down; and although Longbeard tried hard to prevent it, Fitzalwyne holds him answerable."

"Why, I think it would have been better had we made the first complaint," said the tanner; "but all will be well yet—we have no fears. The king is a just man; and if I do take another piece of leather for him, as he promised I should, it shall be done better than any other man in England could do it, and I will make no charge for it." And the tanner having made this magnanimous and generous resolution, looked as if he knew that he had uttered a noble thought, and when his dog placed its nose between his knees, he patted its head complacently, and with the air of a man at peace with all created things.

Friedolinda thought more deeply, and saw more clearly that Longbeard's fate was drawing to its crisis, and that the hour had come, when he must either gain a great triumph, or be cast for ever from his high estate. She entreated Bryan to make diligent inquiries on the morrow, as to the state of the town and the popular feeling, and to let her know the result, as he passed on to Bermondsey to communicate it to his brother. Bryan promised faithfully to do so, and by early dawn on the following morning was up and stirring. He had left his forester's attire in the woods of Kent, and appeared now in the garb of a substantial citizen. The first thing he did was to call at the hostelry, where Athelstane, Edgar Egbert, Adeling, and the other Saxon thanes and franklins were wont to lodge, but he found that they had all taken a precipitate departure, and that not one of them was now in London. From thence he went to the house of Timothy Cotes, a blacksmith, of Aldermanbury, and who was generally considered to be a friend of Longbeard. Him he found—and learned all that had taken place in London since Longbeard's departure. At the instigation, it was thought, of his counsellor, father Eusebius, the lord high justiciary had made a report to the king of the turbulent and unsettled

state of the city of London; and complained especially of the riot and bloodshed on the occasion of the burning of Fitzalwyne's house, in the Lombards. It was said, that so much blame was attributed by the justiciary to the mayor and other magistrates of the city, that they had been summoned, in due form, to account for their conduct, or suffer a fine and diminution of privileges for their incapacity to govern themselves.

Fitzalwyne, attended by Robert Childe, and various aldermen and burgesses, had obeyed the summons, and alleged in their defence the unsettled state of the country during the king's captivity in Austria, the intrigues carried on by Prince John, the general discontent of the Saxon population, and the immense power acquired by Longbeard, as the reason why they had been unable to preserve tranquillity.

"But I see no harm that Longbeard has done," said the king; "the fault lies at your door; and I know that my Saxon subjects have been sorely ill-treated. Longbeard has been a loyal subject and a true man; and it was your duty so to have administered justice, as to have given him no ground of complaint. Normans and Saxons shall be equal in my eyes—and so they should have been in yours."

"But, my liege!" said Fitzalwyne, humbly—"Longbeard has been the very life and soul of the discontent, and turned it into a channel against your throne. The poor city of London could not wage war single-handed against him, when he was aided by all the traitors of England, and by the Earl of Moreton. They understood each other well, and acted in concert."

"How!" said the king, starting as if a viper had stung him—"beware what you say!—have you any proof of this? and that you did your best?"

"We summoned him, my liege lord, to appear before the co-regents, by whom he was dismissed, with a request that he would offend no more. The city of London was allowed no voice in it. As for the Earl of Moreton——"

"Well?" said the king, sharply, seeing that the mayor hesitated—"go on, sirrah!—have you proof?"

"I am sorry that there is proof, my liege," replied the mayor. "Sir Roger Poyntz, now a prisoner in the Tower, was the bearer of the proposals between them. The Saxons were to have aided the prince in seizing upon the crown of your grace; all the Normans throughout England were to have been forcibly ejected from their lands, which were to have been given to the Saxons;—and Longbeard was to have been made lord and reeve of London, and high justiciary of the whole kingdom."

This intelligence had greatly excited the king, and Sir Roger Poyntz was put to the torture in the Tower, when he confessed this and other matters. Richard, still more excited, gave orders to the lord high justiciary and the city of London, that they were to spare no means to bring Longbeard to trial for his treasons, under penalty to the city of London of a total forfeiture of its charters, the imposition of a heavy fine, and a permanent military government. On the following day the king left London, to carry on his measures against those places which still held out in the cause of the Earl of Moreton, and having subdued them all, finally quitted England, to restore peace to his possessions in Normandy. He did not immediately return to London.

The rebuke administered by the king had increased the zeal of Fitzalwyne and the lord high justiciary. Longbeard was summoned to surrender and take his trial within four-and-twenty hours, and, not appearing, he was proclaimed throughout the city as an outlaw and a heretic; and every man was forbidden, under pain of sharing his punishment, to grant him any countenance or aid whatever. Emissaries were diligently dispersed amid the populace to excite them against him; and, once the awful ban of excommunication was pronounced, it was no difficult matter to diminish the respect with which they had been accustomed to regard him. Bryan, with a sorrowful heart, learned all these things, and was about leaving the artisan who had communicated them, when the latter stopped him.

"And that is not all," said he; "a new complaint was yesterday lodged against him. He is accused of having waylaid and murdered Sir William Le Boutelier—the same man who was ill-used in Smithfield for kissing the daughter of Jordan the tanner. I don't know whether there is any truth in this new story; but the people are turning against him."

"It is false!" said Bryan, "and I can prove it."

"You had better do so if you can," replied the blacksmith, "though it would be of little service to him. I am afraid there is no hope. The order has gone forth that he shall die; and we Saxons, fools that we are, will suffer it, and be taxed, and pillaged, and insulted, and robbed, and murdered, as we were before. 'Tis the people—shame on them!—who are to blame. Were they but true to him, neither mayor nor justiciary—ay, nor king either, would dare to condemn him on a false charge. Why! does not everybody in the city, who knows anything at all of Longbeard, know that he was the most devoted of any man in it to the cause of Richard? Many's the time he has done himself an injury by it"

"Wilt thou be stanch whatever may happen?" said Bryan to the blacksmith.

"Ay," replied the latter; "I could have been so once, and could still, if I thought him clear of murder. Let him convince the people that he had nothing to do with the death of Sir William Le Boutelier, and hundreds will gather around him yet."

"Then it *shall* be proved," replied Bryan; and he related to the blacksmith the whole of the circumstances attending the death of that chieftain, from the original determination of himself and comrades to rescue Friedolinda and Marian Jordan, till their meeting with them in disguise in the forest, pursued by Le Boutelier and his friends; and the final struggle between the Norman and Tom-o'-the-Yew, which led to the death of both of them.

"I'll spread this among the people," said the blacksmith; "do you the same."

"But I know them not, nor they me," said Bryan; "and yet I see the thing must be done. Do not this for the love of Longbeard," he added; "think of the cause, and how it would suffer by his loss. Why, we shall have renewed tallages, and more forest-law, until, at last, a Saxon shall become a very slave, and be bought and sold like a pig or a bullock. Oh, my blood boils when I think of it."

"Ay, and mine too," said the smith. "I'll try if I can stir up the people."

"And get others to do the same," said Bryan, "while I go to Longbeard, who has just arrived from Kent, and tell him all that has happened. He knows nothing yet."

"It is time that he should then; and let him not enter London unguarded. He must be bold now, or his life is not worth one of those sparks that are flying out of my furnace!"

Bryan's energies were now excited by the manifold difficulties and dangers that he saw gathering around his brother. But before he did, or could do, anything, he proceeded as fast as he could to Bermondsey, calling on London-bridge by the way, according to his promise. He related to Friedolinda and her father fully and truly everything that he had learned, and he was struck with surprise and admiration to see the effect it produced upon the once pensive and timid girl. A proud sorrow overspread her face, and a sudden energy and enthusiasm lighted up her mild blue eyes. Her voice quivered with emotion as she first began to speak, but after a few words became calm, clear, and distinct, as if she were quite collected, and had summoned all her strength of soul to conquer her woman's weakness, and had succeeded.

"I will go with you, Bryan," she said; "now my time has

come. When slander has tainted his fair fame, and when the number of his foes has increased, and they all conspire to crush him, it is time that those he loves should gather around him."

"And what canst thou do, poor girl?" said her father; "this is a business for old heads, and not for young ones—for men's arms, and not for women's tongues."

"It is a time for woman's heart," said Friedolinda; "if I can do nothing else, I can sympathise with and cheer him. I am not weak, father, though you think me so."

"But what wilt thou do? we must have no tears and sobs now. It is time to work."

"I know it, and I will work! Have I your consent to the step I shall take?"

"I think not," said the tanner; "but tell me what it is first."

Friedolinda stooped low and whispered to her father a few words that Bryan could not hear.

"Marry him!" said the tanner, aloud; "wait till he asks thee. The time is not fit."

Friedolinda sighed, but it was only for a moment.

"What a treasure art thou!" said Bryan in a low voice, as much to himself as to her. Friedolinda heard the words, and blushed deeply.

"I have no right to be at his side now," she said. "I can't stand by him and say to the world, 'here is my place; remove me if you dare—and respect me if you have hearts.' But this right I will ask of him, and you shall be my witness. I will go with you now—I will not lose an hour."

"Let her go," said Bryan to the tanner; "good will come of it."

The tanner shook his head.

"I know it will," repeated Bryan.

The tanner shook his head again. "This is no time for marrying," said he; "and, besides, Friedolinda should wait till she is asked. It is not maidenly."

"Father," said Friedolinda, "my heart tells me I am right; and William Fitzosbert has asked me a hundred times. I never consented before; but I consent now."

"The devil's in the girl!" said the tanner, "you cannot marry a man that's excommunicated."

"If not before men, I can before God," replied his daughter.

"Let her go with me," again interposed Bryan, as Friedolinda clasped her sister, who had sat listening in mute wonder at the scene, around the neck, and bade her an affectionate farewell. "Let her go; I tell you good will come of it."

"We shall see," said the tanner, incredulously; "but do not mistake me. There is not a man in broad England whom I would rather see wed to a daughter of mine, than William Longbeard—but the hour is bad."

Marian wept as her sister kissed her affectionately, but she breathed not a word to make her change her resolution; for she felt that she would do the same in similar circumstances.

"But thou wilt come back shortly?" she said. And, then, as the sudden thought came across her mind, she disengaged herself from the kind embrace of her sister, and went up to her father, and sat upon his knee. "Thou didst say just now that this was not maidenly of Friedolinda; I will go with her, and whatever she says in my presence, thou mayst be sure will be nothing but what is maidenly. Good *will* come of it."

"Bring my treasures safely back," said Jordan to the forester. "But no—I will be at Bermondsey myself in half an hour. So go you forward, since it must be so, and wait for me. I shall tan no hides for King Richard, after all. What a false thief is the mayor of London!"

Bryan, accompanied by the fair sisters, lost not a minute, but taking a boat at the foot of the bridge, were rowed down the river to Bermondsey.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Environed he was with many foes—
But stood against them, as the hope of Troy
Against the Greeks."

Third Part of Henry VI.

THEY found Longbeard and Nicholas Bamme anxiously awaiting the arrival of news of the state of London. Bryan's tale was soon told. Longbeard covered his face with his hands, as he heard it, and remained in silent grief for a moment:—

"Then my enemies have prevailed at last," said he, after a pause—most agonizing to Friedolinda—"and I am condemned unheard, for crimes that I never committed!—But what say the people?"

"They waver," replied Bryan: "they are worked upon, and believe you guilty—not only of treason to the king, which they could pardon—but of treason to them, which they never can. They say you wanted to sell them to the Earl of Moreton."

"Heaven forgive them, for the wrong they do me," said Longbeard:—"if they forsake me, I have no hope."

"Oh, they are foully abused," said Friedolinda; "and false men accuse you of other crimes, even than these. Ay, they say you murdered Sir William Le Boutelier. For the other offences with which you are charged, you are condemned already—and for this, you are summoned to appear before the lord high justiciary, and take your trial. They have set a price upon your head."

"And the king has quitted London?" inquired Longbeard—"and left all as heretofore, to the lord high justiciary and the Queen Eleanor?—and is nothing known of his return?"

"Nothing!" replied Bryan. "But what would it avail?"

"Oh, much!" said Longbeard. "I should have justice—more I do not want—less I will not take. Were the king here, I would surrender immediately;—but I cannot now!—I know Fitzalwyne, and my other foes in London, too well."

"Brother!" said Bryan Fitzosbert, taking hold of his hand, "be guided by me—follow my advice, and leave the city of London to itself."

"What! with a blighted name! Run away, when I am accused of treason and murder! Never!—never! No! they shall prove what they say—I will vindicate my fame before the world, and leave a record of my innocence to ages that are yet unborn. When I have done that, I can die;—and until then, I shall remain in London. But the people will hear the truth—and from my lips they *shall* hear it! They shall know how I have been smitten—they shall hear the story of my wrongs, and what I have endured because I loved them. I will meet them once more. Once more I will summon the Saxons of London around me—and if they come as before, in their thousands, and tens of thousands, who shall dare to condemn me for crimes that I never committed?"

"Leave them to me," said Bammie, breaking silence for the first time; "I will let them know the truth about Sir William Le Boutelier;—not that I think it matters much—for you would but have served him right, if you had run your sword into his ribs. As for me, I would have made but short work of any such base kidnapper, who had served me as he served you; or dared even to look at a wench that I had set my heart on. The people, however, shall know all about that; and as for the other matters, they are likely to care but little what your enemies say of you. No—no—the men of London know their friends from their foes; and we will have another meeting at Paul's Cross, and Longbeard shall be lord of London still."

"Yes," said Longbeard, "stir up the people—and the justiciary shall see that Englishmen will not suffer an innocent man to be condemned unheard. In the people is my

sole hope; and though some may have forsaken me, enough will remain."

"Once more," said Bryan, "let me advise. Why shouldst thou live this weary life, in a continual broil and fever, when peace and plenty await thee in the woods with me? and a bride, too, than whom all England cannot show a better or a fairer—always excepting her sister."

"It is a kind offer, Bryan," said Longbeard, with a melancholy smile, "but it cannot be. I could not offer to wed such goodness and purity with a stain upon my name—and the curse of the Church hanging over me. I must put my slanderers to shame, ere one moment's peace can descend into my breast. I must remove this ban, or I shall die."

"Well, it is of no use talking," said Bamme, "the only thing to be done is to summon the people—when shall be the day?"

"The seventh day from this," replied Longbeard. "Do thou send thine emissaries among them, and the last trial shall be made. 'Tis for their own sakes as well as for mine. If they are true to me they gain their own freedom. In the meantime, I will return to my own house as before."

"I forgot to tell you," said Bryan, "but it is yours no longer. The city has taken possession of it, as the property of a felon—and it remains for the king's disposal."

"And is it indeed so?" said Longbeard; "and did the men of London quietly permit this?"

"They would never have allowed it, if you had been here," said Bamme: "I know their hearts."

"Well, it does not matter, I am resigned! Friedolinda," he added, turning towards her as she sat watching with intense and loving interest every shade of his countenance, and noticing every change, even in the tones of his voice, "canst thou still love so persecuted and maligned a wretch as I am? Canst thou love me in this day of darkness?"

"I came to prove it," replied she, looking up with a gentle enthusiasm that went to his heart; "dearer to me in this hour of sorrow than ever!"

It was long since tears had gathered in the eyes of William Longbeard, but they came now so thick that for a moment he could not see. "Forgive my weakness," he said to Bamme and his brother, as he brushed the drops hastily away; "I shall be a man again, and stronger than before, for the relief they give me. And oh, Friedolinda!—my chief treasure upon earth—I would that my fate was brighter for thy sake."

"Hear me, all present!" said Friedolinda, proudly, her eyes glowing with unusual fire as she spoke; "before you all,

I solemnly accept the hand of William Fitzosbert, offered to me in happier days. As I am, I might encumber him and distract his thoughts from the great work he has to do—as his wife, I shall aid him. I shall have the privilege that none can dispute with me—no, not even he himself—to be near him in the hour of danger and distress; and if all fail him, I shall be faithful to the last. Nothing can blight his fame to me—nothing but death shall sever us!”

“Joy of my soul!” said Longbeard, clasping her fondly to his bosom, forgetting, in the fulness of his emotion, that any eye looked upon them, or that any ear heard the vows he breathed, or the responses he made to them; “thou art mine, and mine only—mine, from this hour, for ever! Can it indeed be,” he added, holding her at arm’s length for a moment, that he might have a fuller gaze at her beauty, “can it indeed be, that the persecuted, the reviled, and the deformed man is so beloved? And by such an angel—angel both in form and in mind! Let fate hurl its sharpest darts and do its worst! I will brave all with hope and cheerfulness, as long as thy love remains to me. We are wed in the sight of heaven from this moment.”

“Well,” said Bamme to himself, for he could find nobody else to speak to, “this appears mighty fine and foolish to me. What’s the use of prating about love, when if he does not look sharp he may be hanged in a week! However, he’s the true friend of the people, and I’ll stick by him!”

Jordan entering at this moment, was informed of what had been done.

“Give us your consent and your blessing, father,” said Friedolinda; “and our love shall pass this ordeal of sorrow and come out triumphant from its pain.”

“God bless you!” said the tanner; “but it’s a bad time for marrying.”

“Oh, no!” said Friedolinda, “all the world can marry in gladness and prosperity—but they are the truest hearts that are joined together by sorrow. We have your blessing?”

“Most cordially,” said the old man.

“Consider us betrothed then, in the sight of God and man!” continued Longbeard; “and when this great effort is made—when my slanderers have been silenced—when it has been proved to the king that I have ever been his loyal subject—to the Church, that I am her true son—and to all the world that my hand is unstained by murder, then shall our marriage rites be performed. If, after that, the people should be ungrateful—if all my struggles in their cause prove of no avail to make them free—then the remainder of my days shall be thine alone, my Friedolinda! We will wander afar

from cities and from men—loving and beloved in some quiet spot, where the story of their degradation cannot reach us.”

During this scene, Bamme looked out of the window into the tanyard, as if he saw something there which interested him exceedingly, and Bryan and Marian whispered to each other; and when Friedolinda once more received the embrace of her lover, no eye looked upon them.

Bamme, true to his promise, sent his emissaries among the people to rekindle their enthusiasm for Longbeard, who had fallen comparatively low in their estimation since the awful anathemas of the Church had been let loose against him. Timothy Cotes, Roger Bumbo, and Peter Brock—the two former common-councilmen of the city, and the latter a bowyer of some repute—took up the cause with ardour, and at various times and places harangued the people on the wickedness of condemning Longbeard unheard, for crimes of which he was innocent, merely because he was their friend, and had stood boldly up for their rights in evil times, when there was no other to plead for them, and see that justice was done them. Day by day cheering accounts of their disposition were brought to him; so cheering that he once more ventured abroad into the streets as before, and received the acclamations which were so pleasant to his soul.

Nevertheless, the sentence of excommunication under which he laboured, and the stigma of murderer which had been affixed to his name ever since the death of Le Boutelier, preyed upon him, in spite even of the support which a pure conscience afforded. He grew more and more austere and rigid in his deportment and mode of life; but even this, he imagined, could not retain the wavering reverence of the few who still adhered to him.

Out of the countless thousands who used to follow in his train, and rend the air with shouts of triumph at every eloquent word he uttered, not above four or five hundred in all the city remained true to his cause; the rest had grown inimical or indifferent. Nicholas Bamme and a guard of artisans invariably accompanied him. The old chroniclers describe his personal appearance at this time as singularly wild and striking. His beard, trimmed with the nicest care, flowed over his breast; and his hair, parted in the middle of his forehead, curled down his eloquent face, and fell in ringlets on his shoulders. His countenance was deathly pale, except sometimes when it was suffused with crimson at the recital of a wrong which he had not been near to redress. He wore a robe of melancholy black, and adopted latterly, at all times, and not merely upon great occasions as before, a weapon of defence of a formidable description—a large battle-axe—

which he could wield with astonishing strength of arm. William Le Brewer, Timothy Cotes, Constantine Kebble, Peter Brock, John Baldwin, and Roger Bumbo were his steadiest supporters, and usually formed the guard nearest to his person; looking upon themselves also, as the more immediate disciples of the "Apostle of the Poor,"—the designation in which Longbeard most delighted. The mayor and magistrates of the city watched all his proceedings with some alarm, but made no attempt as yet to molest him. They were not sure of the sentiments of the people, and they were fearful to attack him openly, lest riot and bloodshed might be the consequence. Fitzalwyne still watched and waited for a favourable opportunity, when a message arrived from the High court of justiciary, which rendered more stringent measures immediately necessary. He was summoned, under pain of instant dismissal from his own office, and of pain and forfeiture of the city privileges, to deliver up within ten days to the constituted authority of the realm, the body of William Fitzosbert, commonly called Longbeard,—a declared outlaw and heretic, who was allowed, to the scandal of the city, notwithstanding the sentence passed against him, to walk abroad like a freeman. This message hastened the crisis of the fate of Longbeard.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"He that depends

Upon your favours, swims with fins of lead,
 And hews down oaks with rushes—hang ye?—trust ye?
 With every minute you do change a mind;
 And call him noble, that was now your hate—
 Him vile, that was your garland. What's the matter,
 That in these several places of the city,
 You cry against him?"

Coriolanus.

It was a fine day in the beginning of June, and the shopkeepers of London had spread out their finest wares to the best advantage, that they might attract the attention of the numerous passengers. The great bell of St. Paul's was ringing merrily, as if for a holiday, and a stranger, who might at that moment have entered the city, would have praised the cheerfulness and admired the apparent prosperity around him, and have thought London as happy a city as there could be on the earth. Sounds of life and merriment were all around; the river was crowded with boats, full of gay youths and maidens in their holiday attire, and the streets and places of public amusement teemed with merry-makers.

It was in fact a holiday, but amidst all its gaiety, a germ of misery was silently springing up, and death, though uninvited, was coming to the festival.

It was the day of the meeting, when Longbeard was to vindicate himself before the Saxons. From one of the streets branching into Old Bourne, a procession, headed by Longbeard, was observed to issue. As the men who composed it walked quietly and with the utmost decorum towards the city, they excited but little notice. The citizens were too much accustomed to the sight to regard it with any great degree of curiosity. Some few of the soldiery and men-at-arms in the pay of the mayor and corporation, who were stationed in the principal streets, exchanged glances with each other as Longbeard passed, but took no further notice, when they remarked that more than two hundred tall fellows, well armed, were walking in his train. Now and then an artisan took off his hat and huzzaed, and occasionally a woman waved a handkerchief from a window as the popular leader passed; but these manifestations of attachment were few. Longbeard was evidently chagrined. It was gall and wormwood to his heart to think, that he, who a few short weeks before, could not stir without an army of admiring enthusiasts at his heels, now excited so little attention.

"Foolish, insensible, ungrateful people," he soliloquized, "you deserve to be enslaved—you appreciate nothing in your friends but the novelty of their appearance, and when that has worn away, you desert or betray them. Out upon ye all, and upon myself too—that I should have devoted my life and energies to your service! But yet I do you wrong;—why should I complain, and curse you that you are blind, when it should be my endeavour to heal and to enlighten you?"

Thus soliloquizing, and with his mind racked by wounded pride and disappointed ambition, Longbeard proceeded towards the open space around the church of St. Paul—a scene which had once witnessed his triumph, and which was now destined to witness his evil fortune. A considerable crowd had assembled, by whom he was received with loud shouts of exultation, and all his former pride lit up his eyes as the welcome sounds arose on every side of him. But he noticed that the assemblage was not so dense as those which had formerly delighted to gather at his call;—the thousands had dwindled down to hundreds—and the shout that once only died away to be taken up again louder than before, now sank after its first outbreak, and was renewed no more. Longbeard sighed for these things—and that a few short days should have made such a change in the people, while he

remained the same in all things; with the same heart to serve them—the same energy—the same devotedness—and the same ambition to make himself great and them free. When they arrived at the Cross, Nicholas Bamme first mounted the rostrum and addressed the people.

“Brothers and men of London,” he said, raising his tall muscular form to its full height, and making up in energy of voice what he wanted in eloquence of speech; “I am glad to see you have not forsaken your oldest and best friend, William Longbeard. He is hunted like a wild beast by his foes because he loves you, and has stood up for your rights. He has been accused of every crime, but he has only committed one—he has been your friend! I ask you, will you suffer him to be led to the death for that?”

Cries of “No, no!” were heard on every side.

“I thought not,” said Nicholas Bamme. “Now he shall speak for himself. But first of all, lend me your voices for a shout or two.” And he waved his cap triumphantly in the air, and cried out, at the full stretch of his stentorian lungs, “Long life to Richard—long live the King of England!”

The crowd took up the cry, and repeated after him, with much enthusiasm, “Long life to Richard—long live the King of England!”

“Now for another, and a louder still,” said Bamme; “Long life to William Longbeard, and justice for the people!”

There appeared to be no diminution of the enthusiasm, as the increasing multitude repeated, “Longbeard for ever—justice for the people!”

“I want one more,” said Bamme, “and let it be the loudest of all. I should like it to be heard, not only as far as Guildhall, but in the Tower; not only in the Tower, but in Westminster! so shout with me till the welkin rings again, Woe to all tyrants and unjust judges!—woe to the enemies of the people!”

Again the crowd was obedient, and “Woe to all tyrants and unjust judges—woe to the enemies of the people!” was repeated again and again by those in the immediate vicinity of the speaker, and renewed by those at a greater distance, until even Bamme was satisfied with the zeal with which he had been responded to, and stepped down from the cross with a smile of triumph upon his broad round countenance.

Longbeard then stood up, and all his former inspiration glowed for a moment over his pale face, as he prepared to address the crowd. Lifting up his hands to heaven, he began, and his words, though spoken at first in a low tone, became louder as he proceeded, and fell clear, silvery, and distinct, upon the ears of his attentive auditory.

"Men and brethren!" said he, "I have pleaded your cause and devoted my whole life to your service. You know how I have combated all the rich who oppressed the poor—all the haughty who oppressed the humble. Every poor man's wrong I have looked upon as my own, and some few of your wrongs I have righted—some few of your wounds I have healed. At last the sorrow came to my own door, and I called upon you to help me! You did not fail me in the hour of need—you will not fail me now, when my enemies, those who hate me because I love you, have combined together to crush me, and to compass my death. Cowards and false-hearted men are my accusers, every one. They did not dare to breathe a word against me when I was present. They knew that the noble Richard Cœur de Lion loved me, for I fought by his side in Holy Land, and, as you all know, was his devoted subject when others were plotting against him. But when my back was turned only for a few days, the slanderers arose, and I have been condemned, unheard, for crimes of which I am guiltless. Is this justice? Will you permit it?"

The crowd shouted, "No! no!" and Longbeard proceeded.

"For your sakes as well as mine, it must not be. Were the king here I would surrender to his authority, certain that I should be heard in my defence, and that I should be acquitted of treason and heresy and all blood-shedding, and every crime with which I have been charged. But if I submit, what will be the result? To me, death—to you, slavery! Ay, a slavery worse than that from which, for many a long dark day, I have been struggling to release you. All of you can remember the times that were. Had any one among you," he continued with increased animation, "a wife whom he adored, a daughter whom he loved, or a sister whom he cherished? If you had, you had no right to them—they were not yours. You were poor, and had no right to affection. You had but to open your doors, men of London, and let in the spoiler. You had but to give up your wives to the Norman, and your sisters to the rich noble. They were all lawful prey for the oppressors! You were called on to give them all up without a murmur; to be patient and peaceable; and not to complain; or if you did, you were cut down by the sword or imprisoned and scourged. But I arose, and injustice became less bold. They saw that the Saxons had souls, and were more wary in their oppression. They now seek to restore the old times, which they know they cannot do as long as there is breath in my body. And hence their hatred of me; hence the slanders they have sent abroad against me, and the oath they have taken never to rest until I am re-

moved from their path. I ask you once more, will you suffer it?"

The crowd testified their approval in the usual manner, and Longbeard continued.

"I see that you are resolved, and that there are hopes for freedom yet. So I will not surrender upon the sentence that has been passed against me. When the king returns and vindicates the law, I will take my trial with a good conscience, and without fear for the result. I see their soldiers and their armed burghers gathering around us now," he added, pointing to small detachments that were stationed at Ludgate-hill and the entrance to Cheapside; "but I warn them that we are peaceable and desire no riot. We have come here, all of us, but to speak and to hear, to discourse on our own affairs; a right which has belonged to the Saxon people from immemorial ages. Let them not meddle with it."

"Down with them—down with them!" cried Nicholas Bamme, Timothy Cotes, and some others.

"Not so, my friends!" said Longbeard, "they are free to listen if they like. We shall depart in peace, and so can they."

The crowd still showed a disposition to quarrel with the military array; but the efforts of Longbeard to preserve peace being seconded by those of Bryan Fitzosbert, who had stationed himself with some of his foresters in the very heart of the assemblage, their manifestations of displeasure were confined to a hiss, and their whole attention was again directed to the speaker.

"Men of London!" he continued, "you all know Jordan the tanner—Jordan the honest man. You have heard how his home was entered and his children carried away by an upstart Norman, Sir William Le Boutelier, and his friends? Jordan has gone this hour to the lord high justiciary of England to state his complaint, and ask for justice. The chief offender will offend no more—he has gone to the grave with his evil deeds unrepented of; but those who aided him are now in London, whither they have come to accuse me of murder. You will see by the answer of the justiciary to Jordan what hope there is for a Saxon who complains of a Norman. Jordan is at the Guildhall even now. Men of London! follow me, to learn the result!"

Longbeard descended from the steps of the cross as he spoke, and, accompanied by Bamme, Cotes, Le Brewer, Brock, Kebble, Bumbo, and about two hundred of the people, took the way round St. Paul's Churchyard, and through Cheapside towards the Guildhall. All the shops were shut, and the citizens looked on in wonder, not unmixed with alarm,

but not a voice was raised to cheer or encourage the once almost adored Longbeard. As they arrived opposite the Guildhall, they found that the whole street was occupied by bodies of armed citizens, through whose ranks a way had just been made to allow a man and two women to pass. They were Jordan the tanner and his daughters, returning from their audience of the lord high justiciary and Fitzalwyne, mayor of London.

"They will not hear us," said Jordan to Longbeard, as they came in front of each other. "When you have surrendered to take your trial for the murder of Sir William Le Boutelier, we may then make our complaint—but not until then."

"And this, men of London! they call justice!" said Longbeard, appealing to the crowd, and taking Friedolinda by the hand as he spoke. "Outraged beauty and innocence like this have no chance of redress! Alas! for the realm of England! Alas! for the unhappy wars that call the king from his people, and allow evil men to do foul wrong, and screen themselves under his name!"

"Let us all go before the justiciary," said Bamme; "perhaps he will change his mind when he sees us."

"Ay—ay!" said the crowd, preparing to advance, but stopping when they saw the formidable numbers of the citizens, who, with arms in their hands, stood ready to impede their progress.

At this juncture, a tall, robust, and powerful man, forced his way through the crowd with vigorous arm, until he stood right in front of Longbeard.

"For shame! men of London!" exclaimed he. "For shame! that ye should be such fools as to be thus impudently cheated by this barefaced impostor! Out on you for dolts and asses!"

Longbeard looked steadily at this bold intruder, at the same time keeping back with his arm Nicholas Bamme, Timothy Cotes, and some other of his friends, who were about to inflict summary punishment for his temerity. "And who are you," he said, addressing the stranger, "that dare speak thus?"

"A citizen of London, who is ashamed of his city for tolerating so long so great a cheat as you are."

"Peace, dog!" vociferated Nicholas Bamme, lifting up his ponderous arm in a menacing attitude to the intruder. "Get thee home, Thomas Twistall, and hold thy lying tongue, or the first time I catch thee I'll pluck it out by the roots. What brings thee hither?"

"I am not come to answer your pert questions, master

Bamme ; so put down your hand, or if you provoke me you'll find me your match !”

Bamme's eyes sparkled with defiance, and he was about to give an angry reply, when he was interrupted by Longbeard, exclaiming, “ Silence ! my good friend Bamme, and do not brawl with this fellow. And you, sir,” he continued, turning to the new comer—“ What do you want here ?”

Thomas Twistall looked round, and seeing that he was backed by many of his friends, and that numbers of the armed citizens were gradually pressing forward to the spot, put on a still bolder front, and replied in a loud voice—“ To undeceive these poor people, whom you are plundering and deceiving. Brethren and men of London——”

“ Have a care !” said Longbeard.

“ I defy thee !” replied the other ; “ there is a price upon thy head, and I will gain it. Three hundred marks for the head of Longbeard ! Brethren and men of London !” he resumed, again addressing the crowd, who began to be impatient, and to arrange themselves some on the side of Twistall and others on the side of Fitzosbert, “ will you believe it ? This man, who for his crimes has been put out of the pale of our holy mother the Church, has come here to-day with lying tales, for no other purpose than to disturb the peace of the city, and to cause the shedding of further innocent blood.”

“ 'Tis you who are the disturber,” said Longbeard.

“ 'Tis you !” replied Twistall, “ with your lies. Good people hear. He has brought this woman here,” pointing to Friedolinda, who clung to Longbeard—“ and cheats you with a pitiful tale of her wrongs. She can play her part well, and is as capital an impostor as her paramour. Good people aid me, while I seize the outlaw and his harlot.”

At the conclusion of this short but daring harangue, Thomas Twistall made a motion to his friends, who were scattered in the crowd, to come to his assistance, and seize Longbeard. His temerity, however, cost him dear ; for the opprobrious epithet which he had applied to Friedolinda was the last he ever uttered. Hardly had the sounds escaped his lips, when he attempted to seize Fitzosbert by the collar ; but Longbeard—his face all livid with rage—prepared to defend himself. But, before a hand could be outstretched to prevent the blow, Nicholas Bamme lifted up an axe, and swinging it in the air, felled the wretched Twistall to the earth. He neither spoke nor moved again. So instantaneous was his death, that not even a groan escaped him ere his soul fled to its final reckoning. The mob, astounded by the suddenness of the deed, fell back, awe-stricken, and uncertain what to do.

Nicholas Bamme, Timothy Cotes, William Le Brewer, Jordan the tanner, and the rest of Longbeard's more immediate friends, quickly rallied round him, for they saw the full extent of their danger.

The mob had begun to waver, and it was evident from the looks of the greater part of them, that they were grieved at the death of Twistall. The friends of the luckless man, backed by the soldiery, and several burgesses, rushed furiously on the small but devoted band of artisans, and a conflict ensued. Longbeard, grasping the slim and elegant figure of the almost insensible Friedolinda by the waist, defended himself with the fury of a wild beast at bay. Wielding his enormous battle-axe, he kept the fiercest of his assailants at a distance. The combat was, however, far from general. Hundreds of the crowd, dreading the consequences, retired from the scene of action, and hundreds of those who remained had not sufficient confidence in Longbeard, now that he was excommunicated, to espouse his cause; and too many grievances to complain of, to take any part against one who combated for their liberties. As these persons remained neuter, the combat, as far as numbers went, was nearly equal—there being about sixty combatants on either side. Upon the whole, the feeling of the populace was rapidly turning against Longbeard; and when a new detachment made its appearance, sent from Guildhall, and headed by Fitzalwyne himself, to aid in quelling the riot, a shout of approval testified that the capricious multitude had altogether abandoned their former favourite. The sound struck like a poisoned arrow to the heart of Fitzosbert; but life, power, all were at stake, and he defended himself with renewed energy. The alarm-bells of all the churches in the city now began to peal their fearful summons to the inhabitants to arouse themselves. Influential citizens, magistrates, and common-councilmen, hurried at the warning from place to place, to ascertain by personal inspection the extent of the disturbance, which as yet they knew not whether to call a partial riot or a general rising of the people. The city was in the utmost alarm and confusion, and the burghers exerted all their energies to quell the danger, dreading that the triumph of Longbeard would be the signal for a general plunder, if not massacre, of the rich citizens. Their fears, however, were groundless, and the fall of Longbeard was at hand.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"Oh, my good lord,
Pity the city of London—pity us."

Henry VI.

THE combat was but of short continuance. In the confusion, Jordan and Marian were separated from Friedolinda; who, however, clung to the side of Longbeard. He, with one arm around her, kept off with the other the foes that pressed upon him, and retreated towards the church of St. Mary-le-Bow. Nicholas Bamme, Timothy Cotes, Roger Bumbo, Peter Brock, John Baldwin, William Brewer, and Constantine Kebble, kept close to their leader, and showed a resolution to sell their lives dearly. With some return of their ancient sympathy, the crowd, when they saw the extremity which every minute rendered more desperate, and above all, the danger of so beautiful a creature as Friedolinda, raised a cry of "Sanctuary! Sanctuary!" The church was now right behind them; but the way to it was blocked up by an immense concourse of people. As if one common spirit had animated them all, the multitude suddenly opened their thickly serried ranks; and Longbeard and his friends taking as sudden an advantage of the movement in their favour, rushed towards the door, carrying, rather than leading Friedolinda along with them. The crowd closed upon them immediately, and renewed the cry of "A Sanctuary! a Sanctuary!"

In an instant afterwards, the massive doors of the sacred edifice were closed heavily; and the citizens, and their men-at-arms, looked with blank faces upon each other, and stood still, awaiting new orders from those in authority, before they took any further steps.

Ere sunset, that evening, the city was restored to comparative tranquillity. The citizens, for the most part, returned to their homes; and of the populace, only a few remained to watch the result of, but to take no further part in, the yet unended struggle between Longbeard and the city. The remains of the crowd, however, still lingered about Cheapside, and as many as three or four hundred persons were collected at the door of the ancient church of St. Mary-le-Bow. At a short distance, and right in front of the building, stood a group of wealthy magistrates and merchants of the city, in the midst of whom, on horseback, sat the martial figure of the mayor, Fitzalwyne. On his right hand, on the ground, stood the priest Eusebius—his iron features rendered harder than their wont by stern resolve. This group was holding a hasty

council, to decide upon the measures best to be pursued, to dislodge Longbeard from the church.

"How was it?" said the priest, angrily, to Fitzalwyne, "that you did not prevent the rebel from defiling the holy sanctuary?"

"Holy father!" replied Fitzalwyne, "it is no fault of mine."

"It is your fault—and the fault of your city; and I blush for you both," retorted the priest. "You have hundreds of men-at-arms, and yet you could not capture this pestilent knave, who, as I am informed, had not forty followers."

"He had about sixty," replied the mayor; "but if he had had six hundred, or six thousand, I would have taken him dead or alive, ere this, if he had not so unexpectedly got into the church."

"Had he accomplices inside of it?" said the priest. "How was it that he obtained entrance?"

"I think the church was empty, when Longbeard forced it," replied one Gilbert Foster, a wealthy merchant, and alderman of the city. "I was there, and saw it all."

"Fighting, or looking on?" asked the priest.

"Fighting, so please you," returned the alderman, reddening at the insinuation of the churchman; "the men of London do not care to look on, when there is danger abroad, as some ignorant ecclesiastics may suppose."

It was now the turn of Eusebius to redden—but he stifled the angry reply which was rising to his lips; "I do not doubt," said he, "your courage, my good friend—but what did you see?"

"Thus it happened," replied Gilbert; "Longbeard, to do him justice, fought with the courage of a lioness bereaved of her cubs."

"Never mind his courage!" exclaimed the priest, impatiently.

"His followers were soon reduced to nine or ten," continued the citizen, heedless of the incredulous interjection of the father; "but he still fought on—every one thinking that each minute must be his last, so valiantly was he met by the opposing citizens. Longbeard continued to fight, retreating at the same time in the direction of St. Mary-le-Bow, when the crowd which surrounded the combatants suddenly opened, and Fitzosbert and his followers slipped through."

"How?" said the priest, "I thought the populace had totally forsaken him?"

"Not altogether," replied Gilbert Foster drily; "for the crowd, as if by one consent, seeing him sore pressed, opened to let him pass, and immediately closed again. Before the

citizens, by dint of blows and menaces, could pierce through the mass, Longbeard had gained possession of the church. In five minutes we overbore all opposition, and arrived at the door; but it was in vain—it was closed and barricadoed."

"Even so?" said the priest.

"Even so," returned Fitzalwyne. "So you may, methinks, holy father, preserve your anger and not vent it against the city. We have done all in our power to quell the riot—and it is quelled. We have Longbeard safe now—safe as a fox in a trap—and he cannot escape us."

"See that he do not; keep watch round every avenue, and starve him into surrender. Your orders are positive, and so are mine."

"Leave him to us," said the mayor; "I will be answerable that he do not escape."

"I hope not, for the sake of your purses and charters," said the priest.

"Never fear," said Gilbert Foster.

"But where is the woman? Is she also in the church?"

"Holy father, it is said so," replied Fitzalwyne.

"Let us be just," said Gilbert Foster; "the young woman is both virtuous and lovely. I saw her holding on to the skirts of Longbeard's garments, her hair streaming over her neck, and looking altogether such a picture of grief and devotedness, that I pitied her from my soul. She is an honest girl, and the daughter of an honest man."

"Honest!" said the priest, with a sneer. "She was playing her part, to exasperate the swinish populace against their rulers."

"She looked, to my eyes," continued Gilbert, "to be playing no part; she seemed the very incarnation of love and sorrow. I hope you do not think it necessary to wage this war against her. If you do, I shall wash my hands of the whole business."

"If she will but come out of the church," said the priest, "she shall be safe—we do not war with women. Make proclamation of that, and perhaps the knaves inside will find an opportunity to let her out."

"I am glad, reverend sir, to see you so merciful," rejoined Gilbert, bending politely to Eusebius; "and I have heard that Longbeard has been foully belied in this matter. The woman is no paramour of his, but his betrothed wife—the most beautiful girl in London."

"Pity she should throw away her beauty on a hunchback," said the priest. "But hark! what is that?"

Father Eusebius suddenly stopped and pointed with his finger to the steeple of the church. All the citizens looked up. They could neither see nor hear anything. An instant

after, they heard a loud rumbling noise in the body of the edifice.

"They are defacing the holy sanctuary!" said Eusebius.

"Ay,—loosening some of the stones to hurl upon our heads," said Fitzalwyne.

The citizens again looked up, in expectation of seeing in the air the missiles spoken of. Nothing was visible but the naked spire pointing up silently to the deepening blue of the heavens.

"I think they are moving something heavier than stones," said the priest.

"Yes," rejoined the mayor; "they are barricading the doors against us and fortifying the building, lest we should think starvation too slow a plan, and force them out by the sword. I have no doubt they will defend themselves to the last extremity."

"Starvation is your plan. You must not force the sanctuary," said Eusebius.

"We have them every way, good father; by famine, if you like it best—and by fire and sword in the last extremity."

"True," rejoined Eusebius. "But are the populace to be depended upon? and if the business lingered, might they rise up again and rescue their captain from your very teeth? I never thought of that. Hark—again!"

Again a rumbling was heard, and louder and longer than before, and then a shout of triumph, which showed that some great object had been effected.

"Let them alone," said Fitzalwyne; "it will avail them nothing."

"Look again," said the priest; "there is one of the knaves reconnoitering us."

The mayor and the other citizens looked up, and through one of the small oriel windows of the basement of the steeple, saw a grim face peering out anxiously upon them. After a few moments the head was withdrawn, and another face, as begrimed as the first, took a scrutiny of the besiegers.

"I know the first fellow," said the mayor, "although his face is so besmeared with blood and dirt, that it would be difficult for one who did not know him so well as I do, to recognise him; 'tis Nicholas Bamme, the armourer, and his being there gives me some hopes."

"How?" inquired the priest.

"He'd betray his best friend, or his own father, rather than remain four-and-twenty hours without eating and drinking. I know it!"

"Then God send him a good appetite!" replied Eusebius, with a grim smile.

"They will eat one another, rather than give in from famine," observed Gilbert Foster; "or I am no true man."

"The knaves have not so much virtue, believe me. But who was the other rebel?"

"As capital a smith as ever made a shoe," said Gilbert Foster. "I knew the fellow's face immediately. He is a man of substance, too, and was once a common-councilman."

"Oh, that is Timothy Cotes, the smith, is it? I am afraid, then, that his own scurvy head stands no better chance than those of his own nails. It will have some hard knocks ere all be over," said the priest, attempting to be jocose. The witicism, however, excited no smile on the face of his auditors.

"Let them reconnoitre as they will," said the mayor; "it will do them no service—they are safe in our custody."

"They would be much safer if you could but get at them," observed Eusebius, sarcastically.

"Go you, with a dozen fellows, and watch yonder, my good friend Gilbert," said the mayor, not heeding the interruption; "and you, John Tyrrell—take as many more and go there. We will hem him round on every side. I, with fifty men, will watch the door."

"Let me know the dispositions of the people," said the priest; "upon them depend the measures that are to be taken. I will now hence, and report to the lord high justiciary the state of matters. May the Lord prosper you!"

So saying, Father Eusebius took his departure. The citizens, although they did not speak, manifested by their looks that they were not sorry to be deprived of his presence. Evening had now deepened into night, and the remoter parts of the city, and indeed all not in the immediate vicinity of the besieged church, lay hushed in their usual quiet. Picquets were stationed at all the avenues leading to Cheapside, to prevent the passage of man or woman; and Fitzalwyne, Robert Childe, Gilbert Foster, John Tyrrell, and the other citizens, prepared for their night's watch.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Though doomed and devoted by vassal and lord,
 M'Gregor has still both his heart and his sword.
 Then courage! courage! courage! Grigalach—
 Courage! courage! courage!"

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

"That strain again—it had a dying fall."

SHAKSPEARE.

DURING this time a very different scene had taken place in the interior of the church. Panting for breath, and well-nigh exhausted with fatigue, Longbeard and his hapless but devoted Friedolinda, and his seven resolute and stanch friends, as soon as they had succeeded in gaining the sanctuary in the manner already related, forcibly closed the ponderous door, and barred and bolted it. In a few minutes they heard their pursuers thundering at the outside. They gave up all for lost. The strong door, however, resisted all the efforts of the citizens to force it. Longbeard and his friends then piling against it every moveable they could collect, retreated towards the altar, first examining every nook and crevice, the pulpit and the confessionals, to discover whether any lurking foe might be hidden inside. After some search, they found a child about ten years old—one of the boys trained to sing in the choir, who had retreated into one of the confessionals at the first sounds of the disturbance. Him, half dead with terror, they examined, and found that the poor child was insane, and Bammie remembered him as being noted in the city for his fine voice, and that he lived in the church, and could never be induced to leave it. What to do with him they knew not. They offered to let him out by a cord from one of the windows; but the child, who had sense enough to know their meaning, implored so piteously for leave to remain, that they determined to let him have his will, as he could do no harm. A hasty consultation was then held, the result of which was, a determination to hold out to the last. There was still a hope, although a faint one, that the populace might be induced to make a general rising in their favour; and nothing, it was urged, would so much induce them to take this step as a gallant resistance. Carefully and cautiously they again went round and examined every part of the building. The large flag-stones with which the floor was paved, were speedily dug up, and moved along, as defences to every weak position. Even the vaults were examined, to see if in their

noisome depths there might not be found some paraphernalia of the dead to aid in the defences of the living. Monumental slabs were removed from the graves and placed against the door, and leaden or stone coffins, with their crumbling tenants, shared the same fate. Desecrated themselves by misery, the desecration of the dead appeared no crime to them. When everything had been moved that could be moved, Timothy Cotes was stationed, with a hatchet in his hand, at the little window in the steeple, to prevent any adventurous climber from without from making good his footing. Longbeard hoped that by the morrow some demonstration in his favour would be made on the part of the populace, and their want of provision to stand a siege caused him no annoy, when he flattered himself that relief was so close at hand. His companions, however, were less sanguine, and they shuddered to think to what dreadful straits famine might reduce them. Yet there was hope if they resisted, and there was none if they succumbed. If conquered, a shameful death was their only prospect. After three hours' imprisonment, and when the first excitement of their situation was over, they began to feel the horrors of thirst. The fountains of holy water were eagerly drained; and to men in their state, the pure cold element was holy indeed. Longbeard took the silver chalice from the altar, and filling it with the water, presented it to Friedolinda. She drank, and felt revived, and her eyes expressed her gratitude and her love. Little opportunity had they had as yet, amid the hurry of their retreat, to pour out their mutual sorrows, or to encourage each other with hopes; but now they spoke for the first time. The sight of her helpless beauty, and her confiding love, that had led her into all this danger, completely unmanned Fitzosbert; and leading her a little on one side, that no one might see him, he wept like a child. But with a vigorous self-control, after this first momentary burst of emotion had subsided, he dried up the tears in his heart before they showed themselves in his eyes, lest his faithful followers should deem him weak, and lose confidence in themselves and in him. It was now that Friedolinda seemed to grow strong. She was no more the weak woman, looking up to him for help and consolation, but his good genius to advise and direct him, and to fill his soul with confidence and courage when all the world were turning against him—the star of hope shining brightly amid the darkness of his fate. Few were the words that either uttered, but these were full of meaning; and whole volumes of truth and love were compressed into a few short and broken sentences, understood and treasured in the hearts of each almost before the syllables had been completed.

upon their lips. To his request that she would sleep that night before the altar, where his first care should be to provide her with a pillow, and a covering from the night cold; and that he would watch over her, at a respectful distance, until the morning, that no rude eye might gaze upon her, she replied by a firm denial. She said she would watch with him as long as wearied nature would allow her; share all his fears—all his dangers—and all his hopes. Seeing her resolved, he made no further attempt to change her resolution; and thought within his soul, how much above all price was the true love of woman—how far superior to wealth and ambition—how far superior even to that power over our fellow-men which so many waste their lives in struggling for, and die at last without one to love them. Fearing to make their stay too long, they proceeded, side by side, to the chancel, where they found Nicholas Bamme, surrounded by the rest, distributing to each portions of a loaf of brown bread and some biscuits which he had just disinterred from the depths of his pockets.

“God help us when this is gone,” said Nicholas, “for I don’t know when or how we shall get any more; but we can hold out upon it till the morning. ’Tis poor fare,” he added, presenting a crust to Friedolinda; “but, bad as it is, it is better than none.”

“Nay,” said Friedolinda, “let me not deprive you of it; the water has revived me; I am not hungry.”

“Give it to me,” said Longbeard, “I will take charge of it till she needs it, and that will be soon enough; I will place it upon the altar, where she can find it. But our famine will not be so great as you fear, my worthy friend, Bamme; there must be bread and sacramental wine somewhere, and you shall search for it.”

“With the uttermost zeal!” said Bamme, in a cheerful voice. “I never thought of that. Follow me, Timothy Cotes, and let us look; the rest of you look to the barricades,—see that every cranny is secure—that not a loophole is left defenceless.”

Led by Longbeard and Friedolinda, Le Brewer, Roger Bumbo, Peter Baldwin, and John Brock proceeded to this task; and Bamme ventured, as has been already related, to look from the small window under the steeple, and take a survey of the besiegers, who were encamped below. The hasty glance inspired him with some hope. He discovered, as he thought, among the spectators, his old friend, Bryan Fitzosbert, and seven or eight men, scattered here and there, whom he recognised as forming part of his company in the forests of Blean, though they were now all dressed in the

garb of artisans, and poor citizens of London. He immediately reported this circumstance to Timothy Cotes, who looked out also, and at once recognised Bryan Fitzosbert. This circumstance was immediately reported to Longbeard, and the news contributed more than anything else to raise his spirits. Bamme soon after reported that he had discovered a large pitcher of water, two loaves of bread, and a flask of wine.

"Use it sparingly," said Longbeard, "and it will last us for two days, should we be confined here so long. It is a good omen, Bamme, and a god-send—and it gives me hope."

"Every bit and every drop of it is worth gold," said Bamme; "and we shall need it. Trust to me to share it out. But we must watch all night—not an eye must one of us close."

"We need not all watch," replied Longbeard. "Take it in turns; two of you may sleep, while the others watch."

"Why, yes," said Cotes, "a little sleep will render them more ready for the work of to-morrow; it may be hard work."

This being agreed to, Roger Bumbo and Peter Baldwin laid themselves down, side by side, upon the pavement, supporting their heads upon such priestly trappings as they could find, while the rest kept watch. Longbeard and Friedolinda walked the solitary aisles together, while William Le Brewer, the thin spare old man, of whom his friends said that he never slept, paced slowly around the whole edifice, visiting every nook as he passed. The night was calm and beautiful, and the moonlight streamed through the richly stained windows, streaking the pavement with all the fantastic tints of the rainbow. Longbeard, as he looked, yearned to be abroad in that sweet moonlight, inhaling the fresh cool air. The means of gratifying this longing were in his power, and asking Friedolinda to accompany him, he mounted to a small platform, that surrounded the spire, on a level almost with the main roof of the church. The vigilant citizens were still clustered in the street below, and a watch-fire burned in the midst, around which were gathered several men, none of whom, however, he could recognise, except Robert Childe, the alderman, the foe of Fitzalwyne, the mayor; and who longed to make the occasion of this rising the ground of complaint against that magistrate, and to step thereby into his place. Turning in the direction removed from Cheapside, so that the body of the steeple effectually concealed them from the soldiers and citizens below, Longbeard and Friedolinda stood out upon the platform, and looked down upon the city, slumbering quietly in the melancholy moonlight. All

was still. The moon shone so brightly, that every building in the vast assemblage which composed the city was clearly definable to the eye of the spectator. A cool breeze fanned the hot cheek of Longbeard, as, with folded arms, he stood upon the platform. The soothing influence of the beautiful night penetrated into his soul, and instead of the perturbed and stormy emotions of the past day, a feeling of awe crept over him, as he stood, with his beloved, in the presence of the universe. The firmament was studded with stars, among which the Queen of Night glided like a stately sovereign, radiant with power and loveliness, and with the intensity of her presence putting to shame "the meaner beauties of the night." Longbeard felt that he was in the presence of God and his works, and his whole life passed in review before him. The withering of his hopes, the disappointment of his ambition, the hollowness of his friends, and the cruelty of his enemies, were at that moment all remembered, and he sighed to think how vain his life had been;—and then the thought of Friedolinda, partaker of miseries too great for strong man, much less weak woman, to endure, changed the sigh to a groan, and the one tear to a flood. The paroxysm, however, was soon over, and Friedolinda did not interrupt it.

"Poor thing," he said, "thy life has been pure, and a fairer flower than thyself never yet was blighted. God pity thee!"

Dashing away the tears that were coursing down his cheeks, he looked again over the slumbering city. All was silent as before.

"Ay, sleep on, ye dull, insensible, ungrateful people! The freedom that I dreamt, ye are unworthy to share, and cannot understand. Sunk so deep as you are in the mire of slavery and ignorance, I have been a fool to attempt to draw you out. Slumber on, and be enslaved. Freedom was made for men with souls, but you have proved yourselves all clay. Oh! it is maddening to think, that with everything in your power, you will do nothing, but leave your best friends to fall the prey of your enemies. A day may come, however, when the seed of freedom,—the little grain of mustard-seed which I have planted on this barren rock,—may be wafted by the winds of knowledge to a more fruitful soil, and take root and flourish exceedingly."

As he uttered these words, Longbeard leaned against the steeple, and was so lost in a reverie, that the storming of his citadel would hardly have aroused him. On a sudden, he started up, Friedolinda was at his side still watching in the tower, the moon was still shining on the house tops, and he could hear below an occasional challenge from the sentinels

that were stationed at every avenue leading to Cheapside. He was preparing to descend with Friedolinda into the aisle of the church, when he suddenly stopped still, surprised and alarmed. A low soft strain of melancholy music smote upon his ear, and it seemed as if it proceeded from the interior of the edifice. Gradually the soft notes swelled out to a full harmony, so rich and so sonorous, that he was convinced that some gifted musician was performing on the large organ of the church. Again the notes sank to a still and plaintive strain, and again in solemn *crescendo* increased to the full compass of the instrument, till a tide of triumphal music seemed to fill the whole air. In great alarm, Longbeard and Friedolinda hastened down, to discover the musician who, at this untimely hour, had, as he imagined, gained admittance by some secret door, or been concealed in the edifice from the beginning. Bamme, Le Brewer, Baldwin, Cotes, Bumbo, Kebble, and Brock, were all on the watch, the sleepers having been awakened by their companions, to listen to the strains that had so surprised them.

"Come with me, all of you. It may sound again," said Longbeard; "and in the meantime, we will traverse the church, and visit it in every corner—come!"

Longbeard and Friedolinda led the way, followed by Bamme and all the rest of the men. Bamme inclined to the belief that the music they had heard was not of this earth at all;—that it was an omen of death; but he said nothing, lest his companions should laugh at him. The same idea had entered into other heads than his own; and a strange awe crept over the spirits even of Longbeard. Every part of the building again underwent a strict scrutiny, and Longbeard and Friedolinda mounted to the organ-loft. They found it empty. The instrument was closed and covered with dust, and bore no signs, that they could discover, of having been recently used.

"It is inexplicable," repeated Longbeard; "and yet I heard it as plainly as I now hear myself speak. Didst thou not hear it so, Friedolinda?"

"If you had not heard it, too, I should have thought I had dreamed," said Friedolinda.

"Let us dismiss the men to their watch," said Longbeard. "We will go to the altar, Friedolinda, and thou shalt pray for me—and for us all."

They descended accordingly, and knelt together before the principal altar; Longbeard covered his face with his hands as Friedolinda prayed for him, and something like serenity stole gradually over his face. Again he started! The same soft, low, melancholy sounds which they had heard before, broke

upon the silence of the church, and as they listened, swelled to their former triumphal volume, and filled the whole edifice with a stream of enchanting sound. He tried to call to his companions, but his voice failed him, while the magnificent music died gradually away. Hastily rising, he sought out Bamme, Le Brewer, and the rest, and again asked them, "Did they hear nothing?"

"Ay, ay," said they all.

"Hark again!" said Longbeard, wildly, as the low music again burst upon his ear. "Hark!"

"By heaven!" said Bamme, unburdening his bosom for the first time, "that music is of another world, and not of this."

"Bamme," said Longbeard, solemnly, in a half-whisper, "do not disturb the men by such thoughts. Remain here, and I will find this musician, if he be of earth."

Longbeard and Friedolinda again proceeded towards the organ-loft, while the group below waited in silent wonder until their return.

"I have read," said Longbeard, "of heavenly sounds, made by unseen minstrels in the air, to warn men of approaching death."

"It is very strange," replied Friedolinda, as the notes again rose into wild but sweet music. "Hark!—and now it dies away as if it melted into the air, and the musician with it. Have you seen the child lately?"

The question threw a new light into the mind of Longbeard. The poor insane boy whom they had found in the church, and whom, in the exigencies of their own sorrows, they had quite forgotten, might, after all, be the musician; and Longbeard remembered that the child had a fine voice, and sung his part well, and as if his intellect were not touched, though in most other matters it failed him. They walked stealthily up to the organ-loft, and found the boy sitting before the instrument, and so intent upon the music he was making, that he paid no attention to their entrance. Friedolinda held Longbeard back, and they stood a little on one side and listened. The loud notes gradually died away, and the voice of the child was heard above the low, mournful accompaniment that he made, singing, to a wild and melancholy air, the words of the *Miserere mei Deus*. Friedolinda, as the solemn accents fell upon her ear, in the clear voice of the child, felt the meaning of the whole, though she could not understand the individual words. But Longbeard understood each and all, and their applicability to his own situation struck him so forcibly, that he continued to listen as if an angel spoke. The singer knew not the meaning of what he

sung ; but Longbeard translated them afterwards to his own heart, and to Friedolinda's, and gathered comfort from them :—

“Be merciful unto me, oh God, for man goeth about to devour me ; he is daily fighting and troubling me.

“Mine enemies are daily in hand to swallow me up ; for they be many that fight against me, oh Thou Most High.

“Nevertheless, though I am sometimes afraid, yet will I put my trust in Thee.”

The solemn chant ended, and the boy softly and cautiously closed the instrument, as if fearful that somebody should see or hear him, though he had no fears of the kind when the notes were swelling to their fullest height, and his own sweet voice was trembling through the remotest aisles of the church. There was a vacant stare on his countenance as he stole along upon his hands and knees round by the side of the organ to the very spot where Longbeard and Friedolinda stood listening, and expecting every instant that the plaintive sounds would be heard again. The child started as he saw them, and the countenance of Longbeard, solemn at that moment almost to sternness, impressed him with such dread that he fell on his knees, clasped his hands convulsively together, and cried, “Mercy, mercy !” Longbeard smiled and lifted him up, but still he was not reassured, but looked wildly and timidly about him, until he caught sight of the sweet and sympathizing face of Friedolinda. He seemed to have more confidence in her, and clung to the skirts of her robe for support.

“We will not hurt thee, my poor child !” said she, in a kind and encouraging tone. “Thou hast not offended us with thy music.”

The child did not exactly understand.

“We are pleased with thy song,” repeated Friedolinda ; “thou hast a beautiful voice, and shalt sing for us again. What is thy name, boy ?”

The child made no answer, but his eyes gleamed with pleasure as he became aware that he had not done wrong by playing upon the organ, and with a wild laugh he started away, and ran nimbly down the stairs before either of them had time to prevent him.

“Poor thing !” said Longbeard, looking after him with much interest, “his chant has entered into my soul. But we must go—the men are alarmed—Bamme has been filling them with apprehensions of ghosts and evil spirits, and the truth will re-assure them.”

They went according, and found the whole of the men upon their knees, before the altar, and some of them sobbing

audibly. They no sooner heard the explanation of the mysterious music than they arose with much precipitation, and Bamme, who was groaning but a minute before, burst into a fit of laughter. But it was not contagious—none of his companions shared it, but one and all looked as if they had been ashamed that they had been frightened by so little. They then retired, without exchanging a word with each other, to their several posts, and Longbeard and Friedolinda were left alone as before.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"Meanwhile, long, anxious, weary, still the same,
Rolled day and night."

BYRON.

By sunrise the next morning crowds had begun to collect at Paul's Cross, and in all the immediate vicinity of Cheapside. Apparently, however, they were but drawn by curiosity to know whether the night had produced any change in the circumstances or prospects of their former leader and idol. The sentinels, who had been carefully stationed at every avenue, would not allow more than one person to pass at a time; so that Cheapside itself contained but few spectators. Fitzalwyne and Alderman Childe, with their men-at-arms, were still there at that early hour; and as the day advanced, it was agreed upon between them, and the principal citizens who supported them, that, as a first step, Longbeard and his companions should be solemnly summoned to come forth. The herald and poursuivant-at-arms, the Sieur de Warenne, was accordingly sent for by the mayor, to whose service he was attached, to summon the besieged to surrender. Mounted on a gallant charger, and clad in the splendid armorial costume of his office, the Sieur de Warenne rode forth alone to within a few yards of the portico of the church. Applying his trumpet to his lips, he blew a blast so loud and shrill, as to wake the still slumbering inhabitants of Cheapside, and cause them to run in alarm to their windows. After a pause of a minute, he again repeated the summons, but none of the besieged showed themselves on the tower to reply. Again the herald blew a shriller and louder blast than before, and as its last echoes died away in the silent aisles of the church, Nicholas Bamme ascended, as quickly as his bulk would permit him, to a small oriel window overlooking the platform or balcony of the tower, where, himself unseen, he could distinctly view all that was passing below. There was another pause, when De Warenne, raising his voice to its loudest pitch, called out in

a distinct and impressive tone, his last summons to the besieged. "William Fitzosbert," said he, "otherwise called William with the Long Beard, and all ye, whomsoever ye may be, now aiding and abetting in his villanies and treasons, come forth! If within twenty-four hours from this present and last warning, ye refuse to surrender this holy church, of which ye have fraudulently taken possession, the city of London will show you no further mercy, but will force your sanctuary with fire and sword! William with the Beard, come forth!—And to you who are now abetting him, the city offers a free pardon for all your past treasons, if ye straightway deliver up the traitor. God save the king!"

The last words had scarce escaped the lips of the pursuivant, when an immense stone, hurled by the vigorous arm of Bamme, whizzed through the air. It had apparently been aimed at Fitzalwyne and Robert Childe, who sat on horseback close together, but it fell short of its mark, and struck the noble steed upon which the mayor was riding a terrific blow upon the neck. The animal plunged and reared violently, and the mayor, almost bursting with rage, had the greatest difficulty in maintaining his seat. At that instant the portly figure of Bamme was seen on the front of the platform, shaking his hand in defiance at the besiegers. This increased the fury of the mayor,—a dozen arrows were aimed at Bamme, but not one took effect, and Alderman Childe gave immediate orders to force the door. A large battering ram, conveyed thither on the previous night, was speedily put into requisition, and thirty men swung it violently against the door. The strong wood creaked and groaned under the powerful battery. Stroke after stroke was applied, and the besiegers every instant expected the door to fly open. It was in vain, however. The tough wood had been barricaded, and it resisted all their efforts, but creaked and screeched under the blows as if imploring pity from its batterers. Still, however, nothing discouraged, the besiegers toiled and sweated at their task. On a sudden the loud derisive laugh of Nicholas Bamme was heard above the tumult of the assault, and immediately afterwards a volley of stones rattled about the ears of the citizens. The mayor ordered fresh hands to the battery, and again the stout oak door bent and trembled as if about to split in twain. Just as the besiegers, about to exert all their strength, were preparing for a last decisive effort, a shower of stones, which seemed to issue from every part of the edifice at once, severely wounded two of the besiegers, while a stream of some scalding liquid fell pattering upon their heads and faces, causing them to rear with agony—It was molten lead. The men began to murmur, and in spite of the entreaties and commands of the

mayor, refused to renew the attack. Groaning with shame and vexation at being so baffled, Fitzalwyne withdrew with his troop to the further side of the street, to hold another consultation as to the measures to be pursued. The policy of starving out the rebels seemed to have the greatest number of advocates in their councils, until the mayor himself suggested the expediency of setting fire to the church and burning them out immediately. Gilbert Foster, however, objected that the high justiciary, the archbishop, might visit them with his severe displeasure, if they attempted the destruction of the sacred edifice.

"In fact," said the citizen, "you have already done wrong in battering the door. Sanctuary has hitherto been considered holy."

"Never fear," said the mayor; "I will be answerable to the archbishop, and he will grant absolution fast enough. Is it not better that we should burn this church, since it must be so, than that yon crooked knave should burn down the whole city?"

"Can we not do it to-morrow as well as to-day?" said the cautious Gilbert, "and in the meantime we may send to the archbishop and ask his permission."

"A straw for his permission!" said Alderman Childe; "are we not the magistrates and masters of our own city, and free to govern it without licence from a priest? Have we not our charters for it?"

"Those who gave charters, sometimes take them away again. And it is not prudent to quarrel with churchmen," said Gilbert; "and if they fix any quarrel upon us, depend on it, we shall have the worst of it."

"I hate such policy," said the mayor. "I dare say, however, that it will be best, as the church is concerned, to ask permission; and as the archbishop is no further off than the Tower, we shall not have long to wait for our answer. Come hither, De Warene," he continued, turning to the poursuivant; "you shall again be the bearer of a message from the city of London to the justiciary. Yet no,—on second thoughts, I will not send."

"I would not," said Alderman Childe; "surely we can act for ourselves. Are we not rulers of London? and is not this church part of London?"

"At all events," said Foster, "let me advise you to wait till to-morrow: and in the meantime Longbeard may be starved into surrender, and the church need not be meddled with at all."

"But I cannot imperil the peace of the city for so long a time!" exclaimed the mayor; "it would be far better if we

could finish the matter at once. Are we never to have peace? Summon him again to surrender."

"And if he do not," interrupted Tyrrell, "and that instantly, we'll singe his long beard for him."

"Let our promise work," said Gilbert Foster. "You have already given him twenty-four hours to think of it. You forget that. Besides, his companions may not be all stanch. The pangs of famine on the one side, and the hope of a free pardon on the other, will soon cause them to turn against him, or I know little of human nature. The wisest plan, after all, is to let them alone."

"You may be right, after all," said the mayor, after a few moments' thought. "Nevertheless it makes me mad to see how the knave has the advantage of us."

A new proclamation was accordingly made; and the attack was not renewed that day. In the meantime, however, the sufferings of the besieged were beginning. All the holy-water vessels had been long since emptied, and thirst, with all its horrors, was stealing upon them. Bumbo, maddened for want of drink, had made the minutest search all over the building, and had at last, to his great joy, discovered a couple of small stone pitchers filled with sacramental wine. His thirst was so overpowering that he made himself intoxicated before he could communicate his good fortune to his companions. In this state, snoring upon the floor, he was found by Nicholas Bamme, who took possession of the pitchers, and shared out the precious contents to his comrades. This supply was most opportune, and Friedolinda shared it with the rest, and was revived; for, with all her devotion of love, and energy of mind, she was growing faint and weak for want of rest and nourishment. Longbeard complained neither of thirst nor hunger. His iron frame was well fitted to endure privation, and the abstemious life he had always led, had made him look upon all sensual indulgences with contempt.

It was this morning draught of generous wine which had inspired them with courage to hurl defiance at the city, and Bamme took occasion to remark that the pious fathers of St. Mary-le-Bow, though they had but little wine, had it good. They had, without much difficulty, succeeded in kindling a fire, and Timothy Cotes had stripped off a quantity of lead from the roof, which he had melted, and handed up in an iron ladle to Bamme, who discharged it with good effect upon the besiegers. Every one of them distrusted the proclamation of the city, and they took this means of showing their contempt for it. Even had they been inclined, which they were not, to deliver up Longbeard to his foes, they had no confidence that the hope of pardon held out to them was not intended to

deceive them. They had also hopes that a rescue would be attempted, and that the people would yet arise in their thousands and tens of thousands, and dare the city to hurt a hair of their heads. They had no fear that the church would be burned to drive them out, as Fitzalwyne had threatened in his proclamation, for such a violation of sanctuary had never yet been heard of in the realm of England. Once, and once only, Longbeard endeavoured to prove their fidelity after the proclamation had been read. He entreated them, each and all, to leave him to his fate, and provide for their own safety. But they were stanch. To all his entreaties they replied by an asseveration that they would either conquer or die with the leader to whom they had so long looked up with a feeling almost approaching to veneration. Longbeard, seeing that their determination was fixed, resolved for their sakes to make a gallant defence, and during the assaults of the morning he resumed all his wonted energy. But while he thus combated, fears for Friedolinda stole over his spirits, and at every interval of quiet he sighed to think how soon—how very soon—famine might take the bloom from the cheeks, the light from the eye, and the elasticity from the spirits of that devoted companion. At these moments, Friedolinda herself was his best comforter.

“We have strong hopes yet,” she said; “but if these should fail us—if all the world should fail us, there is joy in the thought that we shall always be true to each other—that my heart will never fail thine, nor thine mine. We can but die, Fitzosbert, and death loses its terror when I think we shall die together.”

“Ay; but thou art so young, Friedolinda, so lovely, so good, and so gentle. Thou shouldst not die.”

“Better to die young in a good cause than to live, perchance, to old age, and die in a bad one.”

“Oh, Friedolinda, that I were but worthy of thee! Thou givest me confidence which I did not feel before. Oh, how vain has been my ambition that has taken me from thy side! Why did I not know all thy value sooner? Why did I not stay with thee in the forests with my brother? But we shall be saved yet; and were it not for thy sake, I would not wish it—I would not struggle for it. ’Twas a noble cause before, but thou hast made it a thousand times more noble by thy devotion and thy purity! I will hold out to the very last.”

“Well said!” exclaimed Bamme, as he broke in upon them just in time to hear the last words; “we’ll fight to the last. We are not yet reduced to the end of our bread and

wine, and there's still lead enough on this roof to boil Fitz-alwyne and all his company."

Night again closed in without any alteration in the aspect of affairs. The populace had all retired to their homes, and no incident occurred to awake the attention either of the besieged or the besiegers. Longbeard and Friedolinda again took their station on the platform, from whence they once more looked upon the silent city. The weather had remained unchanged since the previous night, and was still clear, calm, and full of beauty. The stars shone with even more than their wonted brilliancy, so free from vapour was the air; and Longbeard, as he gazed upon them, felt all the grand but melancholy emotions of the previous evening arising in his breast. He was again alone, brooding over the quiet city, which stretched out its ten thousand roofs and hundred spires in every direction. The great bell of St. Paul's announced three times the successive hours, and still they neither of them thought of descending. Longbeard turned his eyes continually over the wilderness of house-tops, and sighed to think that perhaps even now the teeming swarms of their busy population had forsaken him completely. They were, as regarded himself, divided into two sections—the hostile and the indifferent. But still he felt in some degree resigned, and a calm serene expression dwelt upon his face as he turned from looking at the city to gaze upon the church below, expecting again to hear the divine music which had so startled him before. All, however, was still, except outside, the sound of the slow measured tramp of the sentinels, and the crackling of a wood fire, which the besiegers had kindled in the very middle of Cheap, and around which a few of them were stretched in sleep. Again turning his glance to the firmament, a feeling of awe stole over him, as he remarked one of those beautiful meteors, to which ignorance, in a poetic mood, has given the name of falling stars. Hardly had he looked upon the meteor, ere it glided rapidly from his sight, and was extinguished for ever.

"Didst thou see that, Friedolinda?" he said; "and is that an omen of my fate? Even the stars, which men look upon as everlasting, fall from their high places, and are blotted out for ever. They all fall at their appointed time; and if my hour is near, why should I wish to avoid it? Yes! Perchance I must fall like yonder star, leaving no light, no remembrance, no mark behind me, to tell future ages that ever I shone. Oh, is it not bitter to have lived in vain—to have been sent on a great mission, and to have left it unfulfilled—not even begun? To have told these men that they

were men, and something better than oxen who bear the yoke, without having been able to make them understand that they were so. To have offered these poor fools the glorious gift of freedom, and to have seen them reject it, because they were too senseless to prize, or too callous to struggle for it? Foolish is the man who leans upon the love of the people!"

"If the star fell, it fell at its appointed time," said Friedolinda; "and it is no omen for thee, Fitzosbert. Had there been two that fell together, I might have so looked upon it. Did no one see it but thou? Hast thou no enemy whose fall it may forebode?"

"Ever a comforter!" said Longbeard, "whether in great things or in small, in busy deeds or in idle fancies. But what's that?"

Longbeard started, as an arrow glanced past them, and stuck fast in the wall by his side. "Ha!" said he, bitterly, as he watched it quivering in an interstice of the brick-work, which it had entered to the depth of an inch—"we cannot even look for the last time upon the night, without danger! Whence comes this messenger, I wonder, that, like myself, has not fulfilled its mission, and shot beyond its mark, to fall into the hands of its enemy?" Longbeard drew out the arrow, and looked all around him, to discover whence it had proceeded. He saw nothing but housetops—from some of which it must have been sped, as the whole body of the spire intervened between him and the soldiery in Cheapside. "Come whence thou wilt," said he, grasping it firmly, "thou hast at least given us a fair intimation that there is danger here—so come with me, and repeat thy tale to my companions."

Descending into the church with Friedolinda, he was met by Nicholas Bamme and Timothy Cotes; and as he held up the arrow to show them, he saw by the light of a lantern, which the latter carried in his hand, that a slip of parchment was tied round it. He hastily undid it, and found it written upon; and as he read the words, his countenance changed from stern resolution, to something approaching, if not reaching to a joyful expression. "Thou art a faithful messenger, after all," he continued, "and I have done thee wrong. This arrow," he added, holding it up to the gaze of the armourer, "shot past us as we stood watching upon the platform, missing us only by a few inches."

"Do not expose yourselves again," said Bamme; "every house, doubtless, is occupied by Fitzalwyne."

"It came from a friendly shaft," returned Longbeard; "listen: what says the parchment?—'This arrow is sent to

convey hope to Longbeard. Let him wait without fear till the morrow, and trust to his friends. A wind is abroad, that will blow up the waves into a storm.' "

"What think you of that, Master Bamme?"

"Never was arrow more welcome," replied the armourer.

"Can you guess the meaning of the latter part?"

"That the populace will rise in our favour—'tis clearly the meaning;—but whence think you it comes?"

"From whom else but from some of the friends of your brother. I saw them in the crowd yesterday. Let us show this messenger of hope to Brock and Baldwin, and the rest of them. Let us not keep all the comfort to ourselves."

The matter was speedily communicated to all whom it concerned, and it rejoiced them greatly. As comfortable a couch as circumstances permitted, was spread in a recess behind the altar for Friedolinda; and for several hours, she enjoyed a sound and refreshing slumber. Longbeard sat down to watch at some distance; and nature, overwearied with his too long vigils, could endure no more, and he also slept.

When he awoke, it was daylight—and he saw the idiot boy sitting close by Friedolinda, and watching her with the most attentive anxiety. But as soon as he became aware that any one's eyes were upon him, he started up suddenly, and was out of sight ere Longbeard could utter a word to bid him stay.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
Oh you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome!
Knew you not Pompey?"

Julius Cæsar.

INTELLIGENCE of the siege of the church of St. Mary-le-Bow had, after the first day, spread rapidly in all the neighbourhood of London, and an immense concourse of people flocked from all parts to be witnesses of the struggle. On the morning of the third day these crowds had increased to an alarming degree. The populace, always admirers of devoted bravery, began to feel ashamed of their desertion of their former idol. Upwards of seven thousand persons assembled in the great arena before St. Paul's, and as the day advanced, they showed signs of a disposition to become riotous. Occasional yells and groans gave notice to Fitzalwyne and Alderman Childe, that an unquiet spirit was among them. A messenger was dispatched to the Tower to inform the lord high justiciary of the state of the city, and father Eusebius

speedily arrived in the Guildhall, whither Fitzalwyne had retired, to give him aid and counsel in the emergency. Longbeard and Bamme, who, as soon as it was daylight, had mounted to the belfry to reconnoitre, saw the crowd gradually gathering, and immediately communicated the joyous intelligence to Friedolinda and their companions. In an hour or two afterwards, the crowd had so increased that all within the church could hear their occasional shouting; and when Longbeard gave them the assurance that the people could not now number less than seven or eight thousand men, their exultation knew no bounds. Their hearts beat high as they heard the distant roar of the multitude; and one after the other they all mounted to the belfry to survey the human tide that was rolling towards them.

Fitzalwyne, after his interview with father Eusebius, proceeded to Cheapside, where he left Gilbert Foster, Tyrrell, and Alderman Childe, with a few others on whom he could depend, to keep watch over the besieged. He then remounted, and attended by a company of armed men, rode with all haste to Paul's Cross. Here he found that father Eusebius had arrived before him. A man was addressing the crowd, urging them with all the rude eloquence of which he was master, to burn down the city and support Longbeard. He had, however, miscalculated the excitement of his auditory, and he found by the cold silence with which his fiercest exhortations were received, that the measures he had recommended were somewhat too violent for their present taste. So little attention did the crowd pay to the matter of his harangue, that jokes began to circulate upon the personal appearance of the orator, who finding by this that he was spending his eloquence in vain, stepped down from the cross and mingled among the crowd. This cross, or rather pulpit, for it was most often used by the clergy to address the people on the holidays or fast days of the Church, was anxiously beset by eight or nine persons, each eager to harangue the crowd. Father Eusebius, however, put them back with a stroke of his arm, and mounted the steps. His stern look and sacred character awed the populace into silence. For a man uninvested with the holy attributes of the priesthood, it would not have been prudent to have come forth alone to withstand an unruly populace; but father Eusebius knew not fear. His stern bold eye, beaming with genius and a consciousness of intellectual power, hushed them into attention. He seemed to feel that he could command them, and this confidence in himself gave him the command over them. One or two of the more turbulent of the populace ventured to hiss at the ecclesiastic, but the disapprobation of the

majority at these attempts was so unequivocally manifested, that the interruption soon ceased. Fitzalwyne, with his men-at-arms, stationed himself behind the cross to support the priest in case of danger. Immediately afterwards, the large doors of the church behind opened, and the organ from the interior pealed forth a solemn hymn, while the venerable Bishop of London, at the head of a train of monks, came forth, and also took up his station behind the cross. The effect upon the crowd was immediate. An array of armed men would but have aggravated them, and driven them to revolt; but this procession of churchmen, with no other arms than the sanctity of their functions, had, as was anticipated, an effect directly contrary. The appearance of the mild and venerable bishop, and the severe but reverend Eusebius, was like oil upon the stormy waters; and the crowd, which would have taken fire at coercion, lent themselves to persuasion, and were silent. Eusebius threw back his cowl, and lifting up his hands, and stretching them forth in a paternal attitude, essayed the powers of his elocution in persuading them to disperse.

"Men of London!" said he, "what are you doing here? Why do you assemble to the disturbance of our peace, and the hazard of our lives? You have been misled and betrayed, men of London! You have listened to your worst enemies, who came to you in the guise of friends—wolves in sheep's clothing, who only sought your destruction! Once again I ask you, what has brought you hither? Can no one answer?" The priest folded his arms, and with his keen eagle eye looked steadfastly at the man who had been addressing the crowd a few minutes previously. But there was no answer.

"Shall I tell you why you are come?" continued he. "Because designing men have laid a snare for you, and you have fallen into it. But, open your eyes, men of London, while it is yet time, and be no longer deceived by the fair promises of these treacherous friends, who make use of you for their own purposes, and who, seeking nothing but their own advancement, care not if they wade to it through an ocean of innocent blood!—of your blood, you misguided men!—your blood, and the heart's blood of your wives and your children!"

"It is not true," said a bold rough voice in the crowd. "We have only been seeking justice for the people."

"Justice for the people!" said the priest, raising himself up to his full height, and looking the speaker sternly in the face. "When was justice denied you? Never, if you sought her justly. But has William Longbeard aided you to obtain justice? Has he not rather heaped injustice upon your

heads, and woe, and misery? If you wish for justice, approach her seat with reverence. Go to the rulers of the land, with peace in your hearts, and truth upon your tongues, and the boon you crave will not be denied. Justice!" exclaimed the priest, with renewed energy,—“Justice! Do you call it justice to screen a heretic and a traitor from punishment?—to rise up in masses, and riot and destroy, to shield a murderer? Be not deceived, good people! The city of London and the king seek not to injure Longbeard because he may have espoused *your cause*. We war not with him for *that*. His deeds therein may have been blameless—perhaps praiseworthy. But he is a traitor,—one that has denied the authority and broken the ordinances of the Church. He plotted to overthrow the lawful government of this realm, and kindle a civil war. Does it not show that he is guilty, when he refuses to come forward and take his trial? If he be innocent, why should he fear the verdict? The lord high justiciary, in the king's name, calls upon the city to deliver him up, in order that we may be at peace. Disperse all of you, quietly.—Nay, I do not command, I entreat you for your own sakes to leave the wicked man to his fate—the traitor and the heretic to his penalty.—Return to your own homes—every man to his own occupation—and the blessing of God go with you!”

When the priest had finished his hasty harangue, he could see at a glance that it had not been altogether efficacious. The crowd, however, did not disperse as he had prayed them, and he had no sooner descended than a very small slight man, in the coarse rough garments of a mechanic, mounted to the pulpit which he had quitted. His cheeks were sallow and shrunk—his whole frame appeared weak and shattered; but in his eyes, there shone the light of an active mind, and there was a wild earnestness about him which betokened a touch of insanity. His long thin hair hung over his temples, which, when he took off his cap to address the crowd, streamed to the wind, and increased no little the singularity of his appearance. A great uproar immediately arose, one party hailing the little man with loud shouts of gratulation and welcome, and the other hissing and hooting him, and manifesting their displeasure with the utmost vehemence they were capable of. The little man looked upon them quite unmoved either by their applause or their opposition, and folded his arms patiently, as if determined to await a hearing. It was fully five minutes before anything like order was restored; but at last, amid comparative silence, the orator began to speak. His voice was harsh, squeaking, and disagreeable, and his gesticulations rapid and grotesque, but he spoke as if he felt every word that he uttered; his enthu-

siasm kindled as he went on ; and even those who had hooted were constrained to listen, for his earnestness commanded respect, even where it did not carry conviction.

He called upon them to look well to their own interests, and not be deceived by the smooth-spoken ecclesiastic who had just addressed them. Through Longbeard, he said, a blow was aimed at their freedom ; and if once he fell, all the odious impositions upon the Saxon people, which he had been the means of abolishing, would be renewed with a severity increased tenfold. The crimes imputed to Longbeard were mere cloaks, he said, to hide from them the real crime for which they sought his death—the crime of loving the people, and of telling them that they had rights as well as rich burghers and proud nobles.

“I should like to know what good Longbeard has done us ?” said a voice from the crowd.

“What good ?” exclaimed the orator, absolutely screaming with wonder that such a question would be asked in London, —“What good ? Where have you been all your life, that you do not know that ? How long is it since you paid the tallage ?”

“The tallage !” said the man with a sneer—“Is that all ? Why, it was taken off by the regents one month, and put on again by the king the next. The tallage !”

“Ay, and the right to plead in English ;”—said the orator, —“is that nothing ? and equal justice, that we never had before,—is that nothing ?”

“It’s all moonshine,” said the man ; “what’s Longbeard to us, that we should be killed for him ? Let those who have got any good of him, fight for him ; I wont for one.”

“You are a base slave !” said the little orator, “and worse than a dog, and I will not waste any more words on you.”

The uproar and hooting again began louder than before, and it was several minutes before there was sufficient silence to allow the orator to proceed. In the meantime, the sky had become overcast, and gave every indication of an approaching shower. The morning had hitherto been bright and clear, but the dense clouds that had been collecting in the west, spread themselves over the whole visible horizon. The wind also began to whistle piteously through the narrow streets, and in two or three minutes, a few large quick drops of rain gave more palpable warning of a storm. The oratory of the elements proved far more powerful than that of either the priest or the mechanic, and soon the rain came down in torrents, and the crowd scampered off in all directions. In less than five minutes the whole area was clear and none re-

mained but the disappointed orator at the cross, and Bryan Fitzosbert.

"Did you ever see such a set of swine?" said the little man to his sole-remaining auditor. "Oh, it cuts me to the heart, that men should think more of a wet doublet, than of their best friend in the extremity of his danger."

"There's no more hope for to-day," said Bryan.

"No, nor for to-morrow either," replied the man. "Longbeard may hang, for all they care."

"We'll have another struggle for it," said Bryan.

"You must lock up the clouds first," replied the other, "and put the winds in your pocket. Believe me, it's no use. But if Longbeard dies, farewell to the freedom of the Saxons!" And so saying, he descended from the cross, and walked leisurely through the rain, until he reached a little court branching out of the area leading towards Paternoster-row, where he was lost from sight.

Bryan Fitzosbert shook his head sorrowfully, and walked off in the contrary direction.

There had been observers of this scene elsewhere, though distance had prevented them from being hearers. On the beltry tower of St. Mary-le-Bow, in the direction removed from the view of the men-at-arms in Cheapside, but that nevertheless commanded Paul's Cross and the parts adjacent, Longbeard and William Le Brewer had stationed themselves, to watch the result of the great gathering in their favour. Every instant they expected the mass to roll towards Cheapside, and demand their liberation in a voice that could not be resisted, and the roar of that multitude made music to their souls. One by one, their companions had mounted to the tower to take a survey of their friends, and one by one they had descended again to their posts in the church, with more hope than they had felt since the commencement of their siege. Longbeard saw from a distance the black clouds that were gathering, and dreaded the effects of the storm upon the dispositions of the people. As the dark vapours ranged themselves in their thick masses over the sky, and as the first few drops fell, he saw the crowds gradually diminishing. First the women made off, and then the men; the boys, of whom there were great numbers in the assemblage, braving it out the longest.

At last the space was cleared, and William Le Brewer struck his clenched fist on his forehead, and descended to report to his companions that there was no hope, for that day, of assistance from the people, and that they must resist, manfully, for another night, and await a new demonstration in

their favour. Le Brewer had implored Longbeard to descend with him, but he refused; the fury of the elements was nothing to him. There was a storm in his mind, which found a relief from the congenial storm of nature; and as the winds howled about him, and the rain fell in torrents on his bare head, he was pleased with its wild uproar. The moisture was refreshing to his temples, and there was a feverish pleasure to him in the violence of the gusts, for amid it all he indulged for one short moment, and one only, in the wish, that the elements would exert all their fury, and in one wild effort, sweep away the ungrateful city, and scatter its roofs and pinnacles to the four quarters of heaven. There was a horrible joy in the idea; and as the loud blast roared in his ear, he wished that he might career upon its wings, and fly away from the haunts of men for ever. As the storm subsided, his feelings became more calm; and in the course of an hour, when the sun shone out again, sparkling on the wet roofs of the city, he descended into the church, serene and collected, and wondered how so wicked a thought should ever have taken possession of his mind. He found his companions earnestly deliberating on the measures best to be pursued. Not one of them, however, spoke of surrender. Every man had made up his mind for the worst; and a fearful determination sat upon every face.

Friedolinda sat before the altar, but rose as Longbeard approached. They had not time to exchange a word together, before a trumpet blast was heard from the outside, reverberating through the long aisles of St. Mary's. The blast was three times repeated, and all the men started to their feet:—

“Another proclamation?” exclaimed Longbeard; “go thou, Bamme, to thine old place, and listen to it.”

Bamme went as desired, and saw the herald, the Sieur De Warrenne, on horseback, on the opposite side of the street, surrounded by Fitzalwyne, Alderman Childe, Foster, Tyrrell, father Eusebius, and some others.

The proclamation, delivered in a loud clear voice, was to the effect that the surrender not having been made within the appointed time, the promise of pardon was withdrawn, and that no further mercy would be shown to Longbeard, or to any one then present with him, aiding and abetting in his villanies and treasons. It further added, that as the church of St. Mary's was not one of the legal sanctuaries, where criminals might find refuge, they would not be respected in their occupation of it, but finally ejected if need were, by fire and by sword. Again the trumpet was blown, and the herald retired, and Bamme reported to his companions the purport of what he had heard.

"Leave me to my fate," said Longbeard, when it was made known to him. "If you surrender now, your lives will be saved, and I shall be the only victim."

"No, no, no," was repeated loudly by all present. "They seek our lives as well as yours, and our only hope is in resistance."

"The people may rise in our favour to-morrow," said Bamme; "and notwithstanding all the bluster of Fitzalwyne and Eusebius, they will not dare to set fire to the church. All Christendom would cry shame upon them, and the archbishop himself would not be archbishop a day after the pope knew it. No, we must resist till the last."

Longbeard again tried to persuade them, but they were resolved. His hopes in the people were sensibly diminished by the events of that day, and his only hope was that the king might return, when he would at once surrender and take the chance of a fair trial. But this hope was vain. Richard had been prejudiced against him, and had, besides, sailed to Normandy, where all his time was occupied by the, to him, much more important business of reducing his rebellious French subjects to obedience. Full powers had been left to the lord high justiciary; and his chief desire was to get the matter settled as soon as possible; he did not much care how, as long as quiet was restored. Longbeard's enemies had gained his ear, and the great gathering of the people that morning had rendered them fearful that a similar attempt might be made on the following day. The mayor had sent to the Tower to ask permission to bring matters to a crisis, by breaking into, or setting fire to, the church; but the archbishop had a natural repugnance to such severe measures, and was apprehensive that he might be called to account, himself, for so unusual a proceeding. He, therefore, commanded that nothing of the kind should be attempted for three days, when if Longbeard still held out, a further report should be made to him. In the meantime, he trusted that famine would force him to surrender.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Let me embrace thee in my weary arms.

I that did never weep, now melt with woe,

That winter should cut off our spring time so."

Henry VI.

THE scanty supply of bread and wine which the church afforded was now nearly exhausted, and even water was scarce.

With the utmost economy, and keeping each strong man upon an allowance that would have scarcely sufficed for a child, there was not enough to last for two days. It was with the utmost difficulty that Longbeard could restrain his companions in misfortune from devouring, at one slight meal, all that was to last them during the siege. As the supply diminished, they grew morose and gloomy, and sat apart; but still they encouraged no thought of surrender. There was no hope for them in such a course, and they knew it. Longbeard found it impossible to keep them from the wine; so preserving a small portion for Friedolinda, he gave up the rest to the men, and they drank it in bumpers out of the silver chalices of the church, till not a drop was left. The supply was not sufficient to intoxicate them, but it made them merry; and they shouted, in as hearty a chorus as if they had been in a tavern, the toast of "Confusion to their enemies, and death to Fitzalwyne!"

Bamme, who suffered the most sorely from want of food, made a great discovery during the day. Twelve immense wax candles, in magnificent chandeliers, were placed before the principal and minor altars; and these Bamme, without saying a word to anybody, took down, and put on one side as a supply of food. Joy sparkled in the eyes of the men, and they grinned with delight as he divided the wax into large pieces, and handed to each his portion. They accepted it eagerly, and looked as if they could have devoured more of it than he was willing to give them. Repulsive as such fare would have been in ordinary times, it was a luxury beyond price to men of strong appetites, reduced to the point of starvation. The poor child, also, whose presence in the church they had well-nigh forgotten, mingled in the group, and with silent looks implored a share, which the men, however, were far from disposed to grant to him. Cotes threatened to throw him from the steeple, if he plagued them either for meat or drink, and proposed to his companions that they should get rid of him by some means; as, though he might require but little, that little would diminish the small store which they had for themselves. The child understood them; and when they debated whether it would not, after all, be the best plan if they let him down by a strong cord into the middle of Cheapside, he ran to Friedolinda, and hiding his face in her garments, implored her, in broken but most intelligible accents, to save him. Friedolinda spoke kindly to him, and caressed him, and gave him half of her own portion of dry crust, which was still unconsumed, and a taste of the wine which Longbeard had brought her in a chalice. There was a gleam of

intelligence in the child's eye as he gazed upon the sad but beautiful face of Friedolinda; and he pointed to the pavement several times, with a knowing look, and made other gesticulations with great earnestness, but Friedolinda could not understand him. The light of intellect burned but for a moment, and as Friedolinda in vain endeavoured to discover his meaning, the blank vacant expression of idiocy again pervaded his face, and with a wild laugh, he sprang from her side, as he had done once before, and was out of sight in an instant.

Friedolinda as yet had suffered but little from privation—the strong hardy men suffered infinitely more than the delicate woman. They had no pride to uphold them as she had; their desperation, which made them endure much, was not so strong to support them as her love was, to support and solace her; and it was the pride of love that gave energy to her soul and strength to her limbs, when both might have been expected to fail her. Fitzosbert, having shared the unsavoury but still welcome repast that Bamme had provided, had taken the opportunity, while his companions were still engaged upon it, to retire and be alone with Friedolinda. The communings of their love and sorrow who shall repeat? The hopes and the fears—the tenderness and the sympathy, and the words of affection strongest when the sorrow was greatest—would seem but a collection of disjointed phrases to those in happier mood; and as such, eloquent though they were when either spoke or when either listened, we shall not attempt to repeat them. The first burst of their emotion over, and when they had sat down side by side upon the steps of the altar, Longbeard took her hand and pressed it fondly, and in a voice softer and more sorrowful than its wont, but with an expression of the utmost tenderness and affection, asked her to stand up in that holy place, and repeat after him the solemn ritual of marriage. Had the question been put in her days of joy, Friedolinda might have blushed and hesitated to consent; but now she replied, with a cheerful and firm voice, that she was ready.

“My hopes are fulfilled,” said she; “and if we die—for we will die together, Fitzosbert—I shall die thy wife, and thou my husband.”

“I will be both priest and bridegroom,” said Longbeard; “and the union of our faithful and sorrowing hearts will not be the less perfect and holy in the sight of Heaven than if all the rites and splendours of the Church had sanctified and accompanied it. Let all the men be present and take part in this ceremony. They shall hear us plight our troth before the altar of God; and if we escape this doom that hangs over us,

as I trust, for thy sweet sake, we shall, they shall be witnesses of what we have done, and see the renewal of our plight in happier times at another altar."

"I have confidence in thy cause, Fitzosbert, and cannot think that we shall be suffered to die in this horrible place. But whether or no, in life and in death I am alike thine for ever. Call the men—they will be but rough substitutes for bridesmaids. Oh, my kind-hearted, my sweet Marian!" she added, the tears for the first time gathering in her eyes—"I had hopes that thou wouldst have performed that office for thy Friedolinda!"

"So she shall yet," said Longbeard. "I feel myself at this moment a hundred times a man, and I cannot think that the Providence who watches above us all, will suffer any harm to come to thee;—or to me either, if it were but for thy sake."

"But promise me this," said she more emphatically; "for love is selfish, and I am selfish. Noble as thy cause may be, and is, it is too dangerous, and I will have thee all mine own. Let love be stronger than ambition. Forsake this unruly mode of life for ever. Build no more hopes upon the people, and live for Friedolinda, and for her only. Promise me to do that, if we escape the dangers that now surround us,—and tempt fate no more."

"I do promise," said Longbeard. "There is no justice in kings—no gratitude in the people! And yet, without the people," he added, more sorrowfully, "what is to become of us? Unless they plead for me now, my life is not worth a week's purchase."

"Can we not escape?" said Friedolinda. "Are there no vaults?—are there no windows, or secret doors?"

Longbeard shook his head. "I have thought of all that," said he. "There is not a cranny in all the church by which we may get away from the bloodthirsty men that seek my death. And, even could I go, could I leave these devoted men behind me?"

"No," said Friedolinda; "even for me thou couldst not do it. But there is another means."

"How?" inquired Longbeard.

"Surrender," replied Friedolinda; "and I will plead thy cause on my bended knees. I will seek the king even to the uttermost ends of the earth, and force him, as he loves justice, and has sworn to do it, to spare my husband."

"Too late—too late, even were there a hope in it. I am condemned unheard, and the king has left me to mine enemies. There is no hope in that, Friedolinda. Didst thou hear the proclamation of this morning?"

"Ay,—but what matters it? Believe me they dare not do as they have threatened."

"I fear they will dare anything. But, nevertheless, we will be of good comfort. While my brother Bryan is outside, I ought never to despair. If anything is to be done, he will do it."

"Yes," said Friedolinda, and her look grew more cheerful as she thought of it; "he will not be idle, even for my sake. He loves Marian, and Marian loves me, and their two hearts will be plotting how they can relieve us. Then there is my father too—and if there is one spark of gratitude in the people of London, they will rise at his call. But, amid these hopes, thou wilt remember thy promise?"

"I will—I will! To be beloved by one good and pure as thou, should be my highest ambition. I forswear all else."

"I am ready, then, Fitzosbert, to plight thee my troth in this hour of tribulation; and the love that endures amid scenes like these, shall endure for ever. Let them all be witnesses."

Longbeard called his companions together. They came at the summons, and made no remark upon the ceremony they were called to witness, but ranged themselves quietly in front of the altar. They looked upon the act as one of desperation, and listened with reverential attention as Longbeard read the ritual in a low voice, rendered more indistinct than usual by his emotion. The morning had been dark and gloomy, but at the moment when he placed the ring upon the finger of his bride, and pronounced the mystic words which accompany that act, the sun shone out in all its brilliancy, and streamed through the stained glass of the high window above the altar, till the whole pavement where they stood was illumined with rays of every soft and beautiful colour.

At the same moment, the rich tones of the organ, rising in a gradual swell from a few low soft notes to a full tide of joyous melody, broke upon their ears; and immediately afterwards the fine clear voice of the boy was heard singing, to the triumphant music that he himself made, the words of the 40th Psalm:—

"I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my calling.

"He brought me also out of the horrible pit; out of the mire and clay, and set my feet upon the rock and ordered my goings.

"And He hath put a new song into my mouth; even a thanksgiving unto our God."

The hymn ceased and all stood silent for a time, expecting the renewal of the solemn strain, but it was heard no more.

"Friends and brothers," said Longbeard, "let the words

be of good omen. The silly child knows not the meaning of his song, and it seems as if Providence inspired him with it to comfort and console us. So go—each man to his post, and if we die, we will die hoping!”

The men all retired, with the exception of Nicholas Bamme. “I wish you joy,” said he; “though it’s rather an odd sort of time for it. But shall we not have a merry peal at your wedding? Shall not the bells ring?”

“To what purpose?” said Longbeard, holding Friedolinda by the hand; “is this a time for merriment?”

“And why not?” said Bamme; “for then your bridal might become our safety. But if you don’t like a merry peal, what do you say to ringing the alarm bell and calling the people together? By heaven, I’ll try it! for it’s time we should make a bold struggle. To-morrow, when we are more than half-starved, we shall not be able to fight, and now is the hour, or never! Ah, you iron rascal!” he added, with a wild look, to the large bell in the steeple, and shaking his fist as he spoke, “I’ll see whether your tongue cannot call some friends to our aid. I’ll make you speak to some purpose. So hurrah for the bridal!—Saxons, to the rescue!”

“Stay,—stay! I entreat you!” said Longbeard, holding him by the arm, as he attempted to rush from them and execute his purpose. “The plan is good, but we had better see first whether the people are stirring;—mount to the platform and look. If you see them gathering at Paul’s—if you see knots of them assembled at the corners of the streets—ring the alarm with all your might, and a last trial shall be made.”

Bamme said not a word in reply, but went immediately as desired, and Longbeard turned to Friedolinda. “How is thy courage, wife?” said he; and as that word of endearment—that word which he used both in love and pride, fell upon her ears for the first time, her face glowed with blushes, and then assumed an expression of conscious dignity it had never worn before.

“Come weal—come woe,” she replied, “I will show myself worthy of the name thou hast given me—and my courage shall increase, not fail. So go now to thy duties, my husband, while I go pray.”

“It is the hour!” suddenly exclaimed Bamme, as he ran towards the pair; “they are gathering—I have counted a thousand of them. Ha! ha! my thunderer!” he added, with a frantic laugh, looking upwards at the enormous bell, “thou hast slept too long—but now I’ll wake thee in good earnest. So hurrah for the jolly peal—and if we are to die, at least we’ll make a noise first.”

Bamme waited for no reply, but ran to the bell-rope, and without any assistance set the great machine in motion. As its solemn boom broke upon the stillness, the men started and stared at each other, but it was for a moment only. They understood immediately what was intended by it, and Timothy Cotes sprang to his side and tugged with might and main at the rope.

Friedolinda had breathed her short prayer, and gathering her robes about her, followed Longbeard up the narrow and broken staircase that led to the platform. The noise made by the bell grew louder and louder as they ascended; and for a moment they were both stunned by it; but when they got out into the open air on the platform, the noise was not so overpowering. They could plainly see the people flocking from all parts at the summons, and in a few minutes a great crowd had assembled in St. Paul's Church-yard, Cheapside, the Ludgate, and all the environs. All eyes seemed turned, with intense interest, to the steeple of St. Mary's—men ran to and fro in great haste—groups formed in the streets and alleys—windows were thrown up, and women and children looked out;—tradesmen shut up their shops, and apprentices left work—all eager to learn what was the matter, and what course was now to be adopted with Longbeard.

Among those who were earliest at the scene, were Jordan the tanner and Bryan Fitzosbert. The usually frank, open, good-humoured face of the tanner was pale and haggard, and Bryan was excited to a degree that bordered upon frenzy. But the solitary watchers upon the platform knew not that these two were in the crowd, though they had full confidence that they were using every effort to save them, either there or elsewhere. All that morning Bamme and Cotes kept the great bell in motion, till the very rafters of the church seemed to shake with the sounds it poured forth. When wearied at last, Baldwin and Brock relieved, and they took their turn at watching, and again the bell was put in motion with renewed energy. But this was hard work, and created an intolerable thirst in the men—a thirst which there was little to remedy; and ere night-fall every drop of water they had consumed, and all the wine had long since disappeared. And now they began to pray for the refreshing rain—the rain which they had almost cursed on the previous day. They would now have given their blood for it, drop for drop. They at last ceased ringing from mere exhaustion, and William Le Brewer attempted it, but was unable from physical weakness to cause even one vibration of the immense machine; and thus it ceased altogether. Longbeard and Friedolinda still watched

in the tower, looking with eager eyes upon the multitude that the alarm had drawn together.—But that multitude moved not to relieve them.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“All was prepared—the fire, the sword, the men
To wield them in their terrible array.”

BYRON.

At the first sound of the alarm-bell, Fitzalwyne hastened to the spot, and held warm debate with Alderman Childe and Tyrrell on what was now to be done. They had still great fears of the disposition of the people; and when each instant they received intelligence of the increase of the crowd at Paul's Cross and the neighbourhood, they left Alderman Foster in chief command at Cheapside, and rode off to the cross, followed by a guard of armed and mounted citizens. The archbishop, who still remained in the Tower, sent messengers to the Guildhall to know the cause of the alarm, and when informed of it, he held a hasty consultation with his advisers, fathers Ambrose and Eusebius.

“If they arouse the people,” said Eusebius, “I tremble to think what may be the consequence. Of little avail would be all the force at our command against an angry multitude; and if we conquer them at last, it will not be until many lives have been lost, and perhaps half of the city burned down.”

“What do you advise then?” said the archbishop. “This city of London is a perpetual plague to me—you must rid me somehow either of Fitzalwyne or Longbeard. I will have an end of it.”

“It is high time,” said Eusebius; “and I rejoice, my most reverend and dear lord, that you agree with me in opinion. It is a scandal to the realm that this matter should be suffered to linger.”

“What would you advise, father Ambrose?” said the archbishop, turning to the other priest, who had not as yet spoken.

“To disperse the multitude by fair promises in the first instance,” said the priest; “and in the next to call upon these laggard burgesses of London, with their mayor at their head, to deliver up to the Lieutenant of the Tower, by sunrise tomorrow morning, Longbeard and all his adherents now within the church, under a penalty, in case of refusal or inability, of fifty thousand crowns. There is nothing to be done with these London traders, unless you touch their money bags.”

"You are right," said the archbishop, in a tone of satisfaction. "This shall be done, and I shall trust to you to give the orders."

"But the church of St. Mary's, my lord?" said Eusebius; "have the citizens your permission to use fire and sword, if need be?"

"Yes, if need be," replied the archbishop. "But I hope need will not be."

"I will bear the message, my lord," rejoined Eusebius. "Hark! how the knaves ring—the whole country will be up in arms if a stop be not put to it. I will brave this raging beast—the people—and tame it either by fair means or by foul!" and so saying, he quitted the presence of his superior with a humble genuflection, and proceeded to the city.

On his arrival at Paul's Cross, he found the mayor and aldermen there before him, and saw a man speaking in the midst of a group, who were listening with much attention; but he could not get near enough to hear what he said. On inquiring of the mayor, he learned that it was a worthy citizen—one Jordan, the tanner, whom he pitied much, as his daughter was shut up in the church with Longbeard.

"We must try some means to save her, at any rate," said Fitzalwyne."

"Ay, ay," replied the priest; "we will if we can conveniently. But ere we talk of that, we must put this multitude into a good humour, or get them to disperse. It would be a pity to set the soldiery upon them and cause the slaughter of hundreds, perhaps."

"After all," said the mayor, "I don't think there's much to be feared from them. Two or three fellows have been making long speeches, but they produced no effect. Another shower of rain now, and we should get rid of them;—but, hang it! there's not a cloud to be seen."

"Hark! now they have ceased ringing," said Eusebius, as a sudden silence prevailed, by the discontinuance, from mere weariness, of the besieged. "Hark! will they begin again?" He paused a few minutes, but the boom of the great bell was heard no more. "Ay, they see it is of no use. Where is thy trumpeter?" he added, suddenly turning to the mayor. "I want him to make an announcement to the people."

De Warenne, who stood among the armed citizens, was called forward, and the priest, as he bent down to him, whispered for two or three minutes into his ear. The poursuivant then spurred his steed forward right in front of the cross, while the crowd very good-humouredly made way for him to pass. He then took his station, and applying his trumpet to his lips, blew a loud blast. The crowd gathered round to

listen, while, in the formal phraseology of the time, he gave notice, that on the three following days there would be a great shooting match of the 'prentices of London in Moorfields, for various prizes, from one hundred marks to five, given by the mayor and corporation of London, and afterwards sports of all descriptions—the quintain, bull-baiting, running at the ring, and others then in fashion.

This announcement was received with loud cheers by a majority of the crowd; but a few exclaimed that it was nothing but a trick, and called upon all present to give a loud shout for William Longbeard. The call was responded to but very feebly and partially; and the priest, with a smile of satisfaction, turned to the mayor and alderman, while his eyes announced as plainly as his tongue could have done, "there is no danger."

Another voice in the crowd immediately proposed three cheers for Fitzalwyne. There was some hissing, hooting, and yelling from the friends of Longbeard, but their opposition was speedily overpowered by the deafening applauses of the majority; and Fitzalwyne took off his cap, and bowed repeatedly to the multitude, in token of his gratitude for the favour with which his name was received. He then set spurs to his horse, and followed by the aldermen and men-at-arms, and a great concourse of people, went round St. Paul's, on the southern side, and so to the Guildhall, by a different route from that by which he had come. He found father Ambrose awaiting his arrival, and received from him the final orders of the lord high justiciary, which the reader has already been made acquainted with.

In the meantime, Longbeard and Friedolinda had seen the gradual diminution of the crowd, and, wearied with watching upon the tower, descended into the body of the church. They found that, during their absence, it had been agreed upon by Bamme and Le Brewer, that now their sole chance was to fight their way boldly through the besiegers, or die in the attempt. Baldwin, Cotes, Kebble, and Brock, had acceded, preferring the chance of a violent death to the certainty of a lingering one by starvation. Midnight was the hour fixed upon for the execution of their scheme, and each man had already lent his arm to remove all the obstructions which lay in the way of its successful execution. The ponderous stones which had been carried with so much labour to the door, were removed one by one, in as much silence as could be commanded, and in the course of a few hours, the doorway was completely cleared, and no obstruction offered to the entrance of the besiegers, except that of the massive iron bolts and lock, which they still kept securely fastened.

Bamme had just distributed the last small portion of edibles which the place contained, and the men, fierce with starvation and despair, stood ready for any enterprise, however daring. Bamme remarked that Friedolinda no sooner made her appearance in the aisle, than the poor insane child, who had made so much music for them, crept stealthily from behind a pillar, and crawled upon his hands and knees to a recess leading from the chancel. Bamme determined to watch him, and walking as noiselessly as he could, he followed, and saw him open a little door, which had hitherto escaped observation. It was a cupboard, and as far as Bamme could perceive, contained a small supply of bread and biscuits, and several large stone bottles. The boy took two or three of the biscuits, and concealed them under his clothes, and looking round him very cautiously, to see if he were observed, crept in the same timid and quiet manner as before, to Friedolinda, and gave them to her. Bamme did not observe the smile she bestowed in return, nor hear the kind words she uttered as she caressed him, and endeavoured to make him understand how grateful she was, and that he was to take a part of his store to her companions. His attention was occupied with more important matters; he had taken one of the large bottles, and ascertained that it was full of wine. He took a draught—such only as a man can take whose palate has been parched with thirst for two days. He then sat down, with flashing eyes, and waited a little, and again took a draught as deep as the first. This appeared to satisfy him, and rising suddenly up, he called out at the highest pitch of his powerful voice, while he capered about the chancel like a madman.

“Hillo! hillo!—ho, boys!—wine!—wine! Hillo! hillo!—ho! ho! ho!—O—ho! Come along, Timothy, my jolly boy!” said he, as Cotes appeared, wondering what was the matter. “Here’s wine enough to make us all merry. Hallo! Longbeard, don’t stand there looking so grim! but taste some of this good liquor, and give your wife some of it—’twill do her heart good, and yours too, my boy! Hillo! hillo!—ho! ho! Where’s that little imp, that knew where all this choice stuff was, and never told us? If I catch him, I’ll twist his neck for him, and make no more ado about it than if he were a chick. Hillo! ho! ho!”

In an instant the cupboard was rifled of its contents, and no less than eight large stone bottles were brought forth amid the loud cheers of all present, except Longbeard and Friedolinda, who looked on with wonder and alarm, for both saw that their companions had lost all control over themselves, and that their sudden joy was as desperate as their previous

sorrow. Longbeard endeavoured to prevail upon them to use this supply temperately; but a loud laugh of derision was the only reply they were in a state to give him. He could have wept with grief and shame—he could have reviled and upbraided them—but they were deaf to all his words, and drank his health and his bride's with shouts of frantic revelry. He turned away from them, sick at heart, and seeing Friedolinda upon her knees praying before the altar for strength to bear up in that hour of tribulation, he took the opportunity to mount to the little window, or rather loop-hole, above the principal entrance, which commanded Cheapside, to take a view of the position of the besiegers. He had but a moment's glance, but that moment was sufficient to warn him of a new and horrible danger which menaced them.

Against the door of the church, and almost to a level with the aperture from which he had just looked forth, the besiegers had piled an immense heap of straw and faggots, and a man was busily engaged in pouring pitch and other combustibles into the mass. Longbeard called upon Bammé—and the startling intelligence sobered him for a moment—and he also came, as well as he was able, and looked forth from the window. He saw at a glance the extent of their danger. The last hope of escape was annihilated. The bold plan he had formed was defeated by the besiegers, and they had now nothing to give them courage but despair. Rapidly descending, they rejoined their companions, and informed them of the new calamity. They were singing in chorus a bacchanalian stanza, and paid no attention to the fearful announcement.

“Let them burn away!” exclaimed Cotes; “who cares?”

“We've wine and good store,
And jolly boys are we,
And happy we will be.
Hip! hip! hip! hip! hurra!”

“Thou worse than fool!” exclaimed Longbeard, clenching his fist, “is this a time for drunkenness and revelry?”

He had no time to say more. A shout from the besiegers rang at that instant through the long echoing aisles of the church.

Almost immediately afterwards, a dense cloud of smoke mounted to the sky. There was now no need of words to inform them of what had taken place. Each man knew the awful danger; and soon the thick vapours pierced through the spirals in the steeple, and other apertures, and so filled the whole interior, that they found it difficult to draw their breath. Then the flames appeared, darting up their quick-

forked tongues, and devouring the stubble and faggots which had been piled against the door. Every instant increased the avidity of the fierce element, which mounted up in spiral columns to the height of the roof. The besieged looked at each other in blank dismay, and Longbeard rushed to the altar at the other end of the building, and clasped the terrified Friedolinda to his heart, while he gazed in horrible anxiety upon the crackling door, writhing under the sharp tooth of the flame. It was no time, however, for them to stand still and gaze upon the peril; Cotes, Bumbo, Brock, Kebble, and Le Brewer, climbed up the crucifix, in the midst of the large oriel window, which looked upon the chief altar, and broke the panes of the beautiful stained glass, to make an opening, from which they might precipitate themselves from the building. The glass was no sooner broken, than they saw that that end also was strongly guarded by armed men, and rendered impassable by flame. The fire had been communicated to both ends of the building, and the smoke rushed into their eyes, and almost blinded them. Here then, also, escape was cut off—and even as they looked from the broken window, some of the soldiery poured a vessel of pitch upon the fire, till the flames, mounting into their faces, caused them to let go their hold, and fall backwards upon the altar-piece. The whole edifice was now surrounded by fire, and the air within grew hot and suffocating. Frantic with pain and desperation, they ran round the building, to endeavour to find an outlet, but the fire seemed everywhere.

The atmosphere was so hot, and the smoke so thick, that the besieged could not open their eyes, but rushed up and down, blinded and frantic. The most horrible sounds encompassed them:—the crackling of burning wood, the breaking of glass, the hissing of molten metal, the roar of the greedy fire, and the shouting of the excited besiegers. The flames at last burst through the massive portals of the church, and the solid work fell smouldering down on the pavement, exposing to view the array of armed soldiers and citizens drawn up in front. The draft of air, while it increased the rage of the flames, cleared the interior of smoke. Now was the decisive moment,—now was the crisis of their fate. They had but one chance left: to rush out upon the citizens, sword in hand, and either escape, or fall in the struggle. The worst alternative was preferable to the horrible death that awaited them, if they lingered, even for a few minutes, in the church, whose very walls by this time began to crumble about their ears. They gathered together, and prepared for the desperate onslaught. At that instant, the flames, which had long before gained the steeple, consumed away the last support which held the

ponderous bell in its position, and it fell, with a tremendous crash, into the middle of the edifice. A shriek was heard, rising even above the tumult of that moment, and Longbeard, who still grasped Friedolinda convulsively around her waist, turned instinctively, and saw the mangled body of his friend Bamme half buried under the metal. The unfortunate man was literally cut in two. A convulsive shudder crept through Longbeard's frame; and Friedolinda hid her face in his bosom to escape the horrible sight. At this instant, the poor child, who had been neglected and forgotten, suddenly clung—they knew not whence he came—to the robes of Friedolinda, and, with a face with something of intelligence in it, and with words of more coherency than they had ever heard him utter, pointing at the same time to the altar, invited them to follow. They went, scarcely knowing what they did. The weak child led the strong,—the almost idiot led the sane,—and they followed confidingly, as there was a gleam of hope even in the guidance of a being so insignificant and so miserable as that poor child.

When they arrived in the chancel, he pointed to a trap-door behind the baptismal font, which was open: it led to the vaults below. Longbeard's presence of mind returned at the sight; and casting one last look at his companions, he saw them dancing in a ring, in drunken and furious merriment, around the great bell, and the mangled body of Nicholas Bamme. Their faces were distorted with despair, and flushed with a madness of joy at the same time,—and they seemed, in the red glare of light, like fiends dancing at a saturnalia on the Brocken. He saw all this in an instant; in the next, he lifted Friedolinda in his arms, and descended into the vault; the child stepped down after them, shut the trap-door, and they were buried in total darkness.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

————— “Softly!—mighty well!
 That corner's turned—so—ah! no;—right—it draws
 Nearer. Here is a darksome angle—so—
 That's weathered. Let us pause—suppose it leads
 Into some greater danger than that which
 We have escaped?—No matter!”

Werner.

LONGBEARD paused for a few moments to gain breath, and the first sound he was able to distinguish was the voice of the boy calling to Friedolinda, and bidding her be of good

cheer, and follow him, and he would lead her to a beautiful palace that he had under the ground, where nobody could ever find her out or do her harm.

"Let us follow him, Fitzosbert," said she; "the child has sense enough to be grateful. Horrible as this place is, it is better than the awful flames that we have escaped. Lead on, my pretty child," she added, to the boy, humouring his insanity, "and show us the beautiful palace that you speak of."

"Don't tell anybody," said the child, in a whisper, and as if fearful that he should be overheard, "or they would pull it to pieces and me too. I would not have stayed so long in that cold church, if I had not had this place to go to, when people were unkind to me. Did you say that I was a pretty boy?"

"Yes, and a good boy," replied Friedolinda.

"What a noise they make above there," the child remarked, without waiting for her reply.

"Hark! What do they say?"

Longbeard listened to the dull heavy uproar, and thought he could distinguish, amid the noise of falling walls and hissing flames, the shouts of the people. But they were not formed into words he had been accustomed to hear, and he asked Friedolinda if she could distinguish them.

"Oh, do not heed them, Fitzosbert," she exclaimed, as she clung to him more closely for support; "what matters it?"

"Now they rise again—louder and louder still," said he. "'Death to Longbeard! Fitzalwyne for ever!' Ay, let them shout. If it were but death to me they should have their will, but for thy sake I will spite them and escape them. Lead on, my boy, or we shall all die like rats in a trap—lead on!"

"No," said the boy, "not for you. If the sweet lady asks me I will do anything—her voice is like music, but yours is hoarse and rough, and I don't like it half so well."

"Lead on then," said Friedolinda, kindly; "but are you sure you know the way?"

"Oh, I found it out this morning," replied the boy. "I'm a good crawler."

"Dost thou hear that, Friedolinda?" said Longbeard.

"Can thy limbs endure it?"

"I should be ashamed of them if they could not," replied she; "but look yonder, is there not a faint ray of light?"

Longbeard looked, and imagined that he could indeed distinguish, amid the deep darkness, a ray of light; but it was feeble and far off, and even as he gazed, he thought he lost it altogether. But nevertheless, it gave him some hope; and

when the boy in a soft voice said to Friedolinda, "Hold my hand, lady, and I will show you a beautiful sight presently," he told her to do as the child desired, and he would follow.

The church of St. Mary was built upon arches, from whence its ancient name of St. Mary de Arcubus, and its modern one of St. Mary-le-Bow, and it was in the spacious vaults underneath these arches, that they were now groping their weary way. They had as yet no occasion to stoop, but they walked warily, and in continual fear of breaking their limbs, or of sinking up to the middle in the deep holes with which the place abounded. But they still kept on amid the thick gloom, stumbling over coffins, or the remains of coffins, and their mouldering tenants, and scaring at every step they took large swarms of rats, which, besides themselves, were the only living occupiers of the place. The noise above them grew fainter and fainter as they proceeded, but the darkness seemed rather to increase than diminish, and an insufferable stench, almost as overpowering as the suffocating smoke and flames from which they had escaped in the church above, rendered their breathing difficult, and at times almost deprived them of the power of motion. At last they came into a current of air, and felt the cool refreshing breeze blowing upon their feverish cheeks. This revived them, and they held on with more confidence, making, however, but slow progress, for fear of falling over the fragments of bricks and stones that were strewed in their way. At last the light broke in upon them; but it was not the light of day—but a hot, fierce, intolerable glare. The forked flames were even there, and favoured by a strong current the blaze was suddenly blown almost into their faces. The besiegers had not forgotten the back outlet of the vaults, where they had heaped up their faggots and stubble in as great quantities as at the principal door. Longbeard gnashed his teeth and groaned in the bitterness of his anguish, and Friedolinda fell back in his arms, and he thought she would have fainted, and that his last hour had come.

"Don't be afraid, poor lady," said the boy; "they've got a nice fire there, but it's nothing to us—we don't want it, and are going another way. Here, this side," he continued, dragging them with his feeble strength to an aperture in the brick-work of the vault, which they could now plainly distinguish by the light of the flames. "But you must crawl a little, as I do."

The greater the sorrow, the more readily is the smallest hope relied upon; and they now trusted to the guidance of

this insane child with implicit confidence, and obeyed all his directions as he gave them.

"We've a long way to go yet; but would you believe it?" added he—"in all London, where they say there are millions upon millions of people, not one knows of it but me. No, no—I would not let them—I was not going to tell everybody what a pretty place I had got here. Crawl, lady; for if you don't you'll hurt your head, and I should be very sorry."

They made their way in this uneasy manner through a narrow dark passage, for about a hundred yards, as well as they could guess, when they heard the voice of their guide speaking to Friedolinda, telling her that she might stand up again, if she were tired, for there was no more fear of her hurting herself. They both stood up, as he recommended; but they were still in total darkness, without a ray to penetrate the gloom—without a sound to disturb the silence. There was comfort in the silence, however, as it showed they were at some distance from the church, and that as yet they had no pursuers. Friedolinda was obliged to rest a little, and she leaned against the side of the vault. The child's eyes seemed to be accustomed to the darkness; for though Longbeard and Friedolinda could not see each other, he could see both; and when Friedolinda leant against the wall, he went up to her, took her by the hand, and said—"Sit down, lady, on the floor—it is dry and comfortable—and oh, there are such pretty pictures on it. I must show you. Wait a little, and I'll bring a light;" and before she could answer, she heard the sound of his retreating feet. She felt a sense of utter loneliness; but the voice of Longbeard, that broke upon the silence with a word of hope and love, encouraged and relieved her. In less than two minutes the boy returned, to their great wonder, holding a large wax-candle alight in his hand. How or where he had procured it, they could not imagine, and they almost doubted the evidence of their senses as they looked upon him.

"I told you there were pictures on the floor! Look, lady!" said he, holding the wax-light to the ground. "Look there! This is part of my palace. Is it not beautiful?"

Friedolinda looked, and saw a curious inlaid pavement, which Longbeard at once recognised as a very fine piece of mosaic work. He saw, too, that they had come a considerable distance over a broad pathway of rough stone, close and well rammed, intermixed with fragments of Roman brick, which he at once conjectured, and with reason, to have formed part of an ancient Roman causeway, leading doubtless to the Thames.

"Ah, you are a brave and a pretty boy," said he; for he saw the child loved flattery, "and you deserve to have such a beautiful place to live in. I suppose you sometimes take a view of the river and the fine boats?"

"Yes, sometimes," said the boy, "but not often; for I don't like the river much. Once it came up a great way here, and I was nearly drowned, and that would have been a pity, you know. Would you have cried about me?" he added, turning to Friedolinda, "if I had died?"

"Oh yes," said she, humouring him; "for you are a kind boy."

"Ain't I?" said he, "and pretty too? Well, well!—but you haven't seen all I have got to show you, and you can walk now as fast as you like, and you will soon get to my beautiful place. But you mustn't tell!" and he held up his fingers as he spoke, as if he would impress caution upon them.

He again led the way, and they followed for about twenty yards further along the same causeway, that had been arched over to a height of about eight feet. They then arrived at a recess leading from the left of the wall, and a strange scene presented itself to their view. The boy looked upon it with delight, and walking back on tip-toe towards them, and again holding up his finger to intimate caution, whispered as if he were afraid of being overheard—"This is it—isn't it beautiful?"

They both looked upon the scene with great curiosity. The walls were hung with coffin plates, polished to a brightness almost equal to that of a mirror, and white and black coffin nails were thickly studded in every vacant space, and arranged into every variety of fantastic shape. In small holes dug into the mosaic work at regular distances, were stuck pieces of wax candles, of all lengths, from an inch to a foot, while here and there, in a kind of orderly confusion, were strewed fragments of broken glass, and shreds of white, red, purple, and blue linen and cloth.

"I did it all," said the boy, with a look of great satisfaction, "all by myself; and I'll tell you how I got the candles," he added, in an almost inaudible whisper to Friedolinda. "When all was quiet above there, and nobody was stirring but me, I used to steal them from the store in the chancel; and in the morning, if anybody asked me, I said the rats did it. I'll light them all up, and you shall see how fine they look!"

"Not now," said Friedolinda, kindly; "you shall show us these presently. I'd rather see the way to the river, where you said the water came in once and nearly drowned you. Show me that, and I shall love you."

"Will you?" said the boy, while a tear gathered in his eye; "then come along. It's not very far, but it's very dirty, and will spoil your pretty shoes. If I was big enough, I'd carry you."

"Mind not the shoes," said Friedolinda; "I've plenty more, and I should like to see the water." Longbeard pressed her hand affectionately, and seeing that she could manage the boy much better than he could, he did not interfere in the conversation.

"You must stoop again then," said the boy, "and go on in the dark, for a light won't burn here—the wind always blows it out—look!" And turning to a narrow passage on the left, about four feet high and two wide, he held the candle before the aperture, and the current of air extinguished it immediately. "Didn't I tell you?" continued he, "but never mind—we shall see the sky presently. Give me your hand again."

Friedolinda gave him her hand, as desired, and stooping to the uneasy posture rendered necessary by the lowness of the vault, followed him with cautious steps, Longbeard bringing up the rear.

"It's very wet here," said the boy, as they came within hearing of the sound of running waters; "but it's not deep, and you must paddle through it—plash! plash! I like it in the summer time, and so would you if you lived here." As he concluded, they found themselves suddenly half knee deep in water, and Friedolinda stopped for a moment, uncertain whether to proceed.

"Don't be afraid," said the boy; "it's almost up to my breast sometimes—but I don't care for it, and won't care for anything while you're with me; and you may stand up now, for the roof's higher a great deal, and we shall see the big river presently, and the boats on it."

"God grant it!" exclaimed Longbeard, fervently. "My heart bleeds, Friedolinda, to think of the dangers that may yet await thee!"

"Are they not shared with thee, Fitzosbert?—That lightens them."

"Keep to the left, lady," said the boy; "this way. Look, there's the river—don't you see?"

They looked with eager eyes, as they turned the corner, and a faint light breaking in upon them, they saw that they were in the course of a brook, which on the spot where they stood was not more than three inches in depth, and at the distance of about twenty yards, they could plainly distinguish the River Thames, and the boats passing and repassing upon it. To their great relief also they saw that it was high water,

and that there was no danger from the tide in their hiding-place. Their faces beamed with joy at the welcome sight, and Friedolinda giving vent to the feelings that she had long suppressed, fell into Longbeard's bosom and sobbed aloud. The boy gazed with wonder upon her for a moment or two, and then began to weep and howl in a most melancholy manner, and falling upon his knees, intreated her forgiveness in the most piteous and incoherent tones.

"Forgive thee, poor child!" said Friedolinda, "I pity thee and thank thee."

"You said before that you would love me," replied the boy, still weeping.

"And so I do, and always will," said she; "so dry thy tears, and don't weep any longer."

"Well, I won't," replied he, "and I'll do anything you ask me."

"Thou shalt sail with us in a boat down the river," said Longbeard, "and get one for us as soon as it is dark. Wilt thou?"

"Yes, if the lady asks me," replied the boy.

"Well, I do ask thee," said Friedolinda; "and thou shalt come with us, and live with us always."

The boy clapped his hands joyfully together, and in the exuberance of his delight, his thoughts began to be confused again, and his words to be less coherent and distinct than they were before. But he recovered after a time sufficiently to understand what Longbeard and Friedolinda had agreed upon: that they were all to remain where they were until after night-fall, when they might be able to steal out unobserved to the bank of the river at low water, and take possession of the first boat that was convenient. All the difficulties that lay in the way of the successful execution of this plan of escape were successively considered. Even while they were debating upon them, a thick fog came on, which revived their courage, and gave them new hopes that all would yet be well. It was resolved, that if the fog continued after night-fall, and they could get a boat, of which they entertained not the slightest doubt, Longbeard should row boldly to the stairs at London Bridge, and land Friedolinda and the boy, and immediately afterwards shoot off into the middle of the stream. Friedolinda was then to proceed to her father's house on the bridge, and give him news of their safety, and gain such assistance as she could from Bryan Fitzosbert, who would doubtless either be there or within call. She was then to return, with as slight delay as possible, and rejoin her husband, and before daylight they hoped to be far away from London, and out of the reach of all pursuit. Leaving them for a short time to

form these plans, and indulge these hopes in their dreary hiding-place—which love and hope rendered so much less dreary than it might have been—let us detail the events that occurred elsewhere, after their almost miraculous escape from St. Mary's, and bestow a word or two upon the sorrows of other personages of our history.

CHAPTER XL.

“With scoffs and scorn, and contumelious taunts,
In open market-place produced they them,
To be a common spectacle to all.”

Henry VI.

THE furious group, composed of Timothy Cotes, William Le Brewer, Roger Bumbo, Constantine Kebble, Peter Brock, and John Baldwin, whom we left dancing amid the flames, in insane and drunken merriment, around the great bell that covered the dead and mutilated body of their friend Nicholas Bamme, no sooner saw that the fire had consumed the massive door of the church, than, axe in hand, they rushed forth over the burning ruins, to deal death around them, or to receive it. But desperate as was the impetuosity with which they went through dangers that some men would have shrunk from, the struggle did not last two minutes. The numbers of the citizens were too overwhelming, and they were all secured and disarmed. In the meanwhile, the whole church was enveloped in fire, the glow from which turned into sapphire the azure of the approaching twilight. The whole firmament was illumined, and for miles around thousands of the citizens were watching its progress. The tall steeple, just as Longbeard and Friedolinda disappeared, was observed to vibrate; the spectators held their breath in anxiety; in a minute afterwards it fell, and a cloud of mingled dust and smoke, and flying sparks, announced that the destruction was complete. The flames now mounted up more fiercely than ever; and the loud cry, heard by Longbeard and Friedolinda even in the vaults beneath, resounded through the city—“Death to Longbeard!—Fitzalwyne for ever!”

Bryan Fitzosbert and Jordan the tanner were present in the crowd, and looked with eager eyes for their brother and daughter, as the reckless combatants were successively overpowered. Piercing their way, by dint of strength of arm, through the dense mass of the spectators, they at length contrived to approach so near to the thickest of the strife, as to

ascertain that neither Longbeard nor Friedolinda was there. The noise and confusion were tremendous, as the men were bound hand and foot, placed in a cart, and driven towards the Tower; and still the cry was—"Death to Longbeard!—Fitzalwyne for ever!"

"Oh, my daughter!—my daughter!" exclaimed the tanner. "She must have perished in the flames! Oh, would that I had died ere I had seen this day!"

"Step aside a minute, or we shall be trodden under foot," said Bryan, dragging the disconsolate father into one of the narrow alleys on the other side of Cheap. "Here come some of the victims, with the villanous, hard-hearted rabble behind them."

"Yes, here they come!" said a third person, who had joined them unperceived. It was the little spare man, with the shrill voice, who had made the last vain appeal to the people in favour of Longbeard. "Poor fools! they don't know their friends from their foes, and love and hate by fits. Keep close to the wall, or you will be squeezed to death. What a mad multitude!"

The shades of night were rapidly advancing, but the light withheld by nature was supplied by the angry passions of man. The conflagration, which was still raging with the greatest fury, and threatening destruction to the whole street, cast a lurid and dreadful glare, which rendered all objects distinct, but ghastly. So many combustibles had been piled against the door of St. Mary's, that the soldiery, to prevent the fire from spreading over the whole of that quarter of the city, which was full of wooden tenements, were obliged to pull down several houses on each side, and in front, of the burning church. No other means of safety were employed, and the fire was left to itself, to exhaust its fury with its materials.

A few minutes after the three persons already mentioned had reached the covert of the alley, the howling multitude swept by. The scene was at that moment truly awful; and, as the immense mass rushed onwards, it would have puzzled a wise man to have decided which was the most to be dreaded, —the all-consuming, irresistible fire, or the excited passions of that ignorant and capricious crowd. Onwards, by hundreds and thousands they swept, till the great cause of all the commotion appeared. In a cart, drawn by two horses, rode the six unhappy men, looking with scowling visages upon the crowd, Timothy Cotes now and then breaking out into a drunken song. Behind the cart rode the mayor Fitzalwyne, with his cap and chain of office, and ponderous broad-sword,

mounted on a prancing charger. Beside him were Robert Childe, Gilbert Foster, John Tyrrell, and other magistrates, similarly mounted. After them rode the Sieur de Warenne, in his official accoutrements. Then came a file of the city guard, armed with their falchions; and last, the innumerable swarms of the populace, roaring and screaming, and hooting with joy, at the fall of the man, whom, but a short month before, they had looked upon as a demi-god.

Jordan and his companions were sick at heart, and the mob had passed them, and were out of sight, on their way to the Tower, before either of them broke silence.

"Is it not beastly? is it not disgusting? the ingratitude of man!" said Bryan, at last. "Who could have thought that the power and the glory of William Longbeard could have so fallen?"

"I could almost find it in my heart," observed the little man, "to say that he is rightly punished, for having served so insensate and wicked a crew. Hark at the blackguards—how they shout!"

"Let the poor fools bellow!" said Bryan; "they have betrayed their friend, and they may, perhaps, one day find it to their cost."

"Oh, they are blinder than moles and stupider than blocks!" said their companion: "to have thus deserted the last support of a great cause. But that cause is not altogether lost. Though one of its main branches be lopped off, the tree shall still flourish! The old Saxon oak shall still blossom in the spring, and its sons shall rejoice under its shadow!"

"Yes," replied Bryan, sharing the enthusiasm of the speaker; for he grew eloquent as he became excited, and his enthusiasm was contagious. "It was a great cause, or William Fitzosbert would never have embraced it. Let no man think that he would ever have consented to be a mere leader of a mob, and a panderer to their prejudices! Oh, no,—they have been in quest of noble game, and a lordly head has been struck down. But," he continued, in a still more impassioned tone, "if the cause has been crushed in these crowded lanes and dirty thoroughfares, it shall revive again in the green woods. There is room in the merry forests for freedom—and bold hearts to struggle for her yet!"

"Yes, by heaven!" exclaimed the man, inspired by the enthusiasm of the other; "as long as there is nerve in this hand or blood in these veins!"

"Oh, my daughter! my daughter!" again exclaimed Jordan, with a groan. "Will no one help me to inquire about her?"

"Yes, that will I," said Bryan; "for whatever her fate is,

William Fitzosbert has shared it. Alive or dead, we shall find them together! Come, give me your arm. You are faint."

"Oh, I am sick at heart!" replied Jordan; "and I hate the city of London and everybody in it. Oh, my child—my child! a poor unoffending girl that never did harm to any one—and they have used her thus! Lead me, Bryan Fitzosbert, for there is a film over my eyes, and my brain reels."

"Let us return to the ruins. There are some of my Saxon hearts there, and they may assist us. Come."

Jordan's grief had overpowered him, and he walked with faltering steps, leaning upon the arm of the hunter, towards the smouldering ruins of St. Mary's. Such persons as knew him, stepped aside to let him pass, and looked upon him with pitying eyes—but no one spoke. On their arrival in front of the still raging fire, they found a great concourse of persons still assembled, amongst whom Bryan soon recognised the foresters that had accompanied him from Blean, and his old acquaintance, Abra Ben Acadabra. The quack had still an eye for business, and whenever a crowd gathered, no matter for what purpose, there he was sure to be found. But so much interest did he feel in the fate of Friedolinda and the sorrows of her father, that he stopped in the midst of an eloquent eulogium upon a bread pill, which he was vaunting as a cure for all diseases, and made his way through a group of listeners to the side of the tanner. He was but a poor comforter, however, and came but to tell him that in all probability both Friedolinda and Longbeard had perished in the flames, or had been crushed to pieces by the fall of the great bell.

"The bell must be red hot by this time," said he: "and it is absolutely buried under piles of burning wood and molten lead. Ah, if they had but taken some of my specifics when I saw them in the forest, and remained where they were, this would not have happened."

"Curse your specifics!" said Bryan; "is this a time to prate?"

"I hope you may never stand in need of them," said the quack, very politely; "but, among other valuable properties, they are a cure for a bad temper. Good day to you!" And so saying, he returned to the place he had left, and the next moment Bryan heard his voice, piercing above the din of the people, and distinguished the words, "Will you buy?—will you buy? Universal remedy!—tooth-ache—head-ache—rheumatism—asthma—witchcraft!"

All the inquiries instituted led to an expression of the same opinion as that given by Abra Ben Acadabra, and no one

entertained the slightest hope that either Longbeard or Friedolinda had escaped destruction. But there was no means of ascertaining this till the fire was extinguished and the ruins had cooled; and as this could not be till the next day at the earliest, Bryan endeavoured to lead the reluctant father away from a scene that was to him so awful. But Jordan still lingered—was still unwilling to renounce all hope—and expressed his grief in such piteous exclamations, that he very soon became an object of interest to the crowd. Some of them shook hands with him, and bade him be of good cheer; and others swore to revenge the death of his daughter, if she had indeed perished. As fickle in their hate as in their love, they now began to regard Longbeard as a persecuted and martyred man; and the little, thin, spare artisan, of whom we have already made mention, seeing their disposition, detailed, in such glowing terms, the greatness alike both of his cause and his sufferings, that the cry of “Longbeard for ever!” repeated by a thousand mouths, was again heard in the city. In the midst of his harangue, and of this returning enthusiasm, a rumour was spread abroad that there were rare doings at the Elms in Smithfield; that no less than six gibbets were erected; and that Bumbo, Cotes, Le Brewer, Brock, Baldwin, and Kebble, were to be hanged that very night. As the rumour spread, the listeners disappeared; gangs of them, forty or fifty at a time, rushed towards Smithfield as fast as curiosity could impel them; and in a few minutes the little man had none to listen to him but Jordan, Bryan, Abra Ben Acadabra, the dozen foresters, and a few ragged boys, undecided whether they liked best to see a fire or a hanging.

“There they go again!” said the man, with a bitter smile—“there they go again! and the devil go with them!”

He ceased, and disappeared from the scene. Abra Ben Acadabra packed up his medicines, and, without saying a word to anybody, trudged off towards Smithfield in search of business. Jordan and Bryan still lingered, but the detachments of armed citizens, placed there by the mayor’s orders, would not allow them to approach too near; and at last, with a heavy heart, the tanner went to his own house, to share his sorrow with his remaining child. Bryan accompanied him, after having given directions to the foresters to remain at a hostelry near the bridge, where they might be within call at any time, should their assistance be needed.

CHAPTER XLI.

"Last scene of all,"
That ends this strange eventful history."
As you Like It.

THE circle that gathered that night around the supper table of Jordan the tanner, at his house on the bridge was a mournful one indeed. Jordan was sore stricken at heart, and refused to be comforted. The only reply he could make to the consolations which Bryan offered was, "My child! my child!" And Bryan, who stood in need of consolation himself, soon ceased to offer any to the father; but carried his sympathy and sorrow to the more congenial heart of Marian. And Marian's grief was, perhaps, the most touching of all. Her lost sister was her dearest friend; there had been no rivalry between them, but a mutual affection built upon that most solid of all foundations—esteem and respect. Amid her own grief, she noticed that her father's eyes were often turned towards a spinning-wheel that stood in the corner of the room, and that as often as he looked, he turned away his face with an expression of anguish. At that wheel Friedolinda had often sat and sung in her happy hours, and it was the remembrance of those times that brought pain to the father's heart. Marian went quietly and removed it into another room. Jordan thanked her with a look, and Bryan, who saw it all, half forgot his own grief in admiration of the gentle kindness which prompted the action. Jordan with great difficulty was persuaded to drink a cup of wine, and Bryan followed his example; but in all other respects the evening repast, though spread upon the table, remained untasted. Even the dog Odin knew that something was wrong, and missing Friedolinda, refused to take its usual bone, and went prowling about the house, looking into every corner, and breaking out occasionally into a melancholy whine. At last, the animal, after being engaged in this manner for about a quarter of an hour, went and sat down at the feet of the tanner, and looked up in his face. The tanner took no notice. The dog put its paw upon his knee, and whined and looked wistfully at him. The tanner lifted his eyes, "Poor dog!" said he; "she was a good mistress to thee!" The dog gave another whine, and then went round the house upon a fresh excursion, moaning and snuffing in every nook and corner.

Gideon the apprentice, and Bertha the serving wench, seemed less affected than the dog; for though they expressed

their sorrow very loudly, they ate their supper, which the dog did not. Bertha took occasion to tell the boy that she was sure something wrong was going to happen, for the very day Friedolinda had returned from Willenden, a coffin flew out of the fire, and there had been winding-sheets in the candles every night since.

"It's an awful thing," said she, "and spoils two marriages; for Marian, in common decency, will not be wed this twelvemonth. Ah! Gideon! Gideon!" she added, "never make the mayor of London thine enemy, or an alderman, or even a common-council man; for if Longbeard had not done so, we might all have been alive and merry at this moment. But, bless me!" she exclaimed suddenly, as a tapping, two or three times repeated, was heard at the outer door, "Who can that be at this time o' night? There it is again! Come with me, Gideon, for I am afraid of mischief. Evil never comes alone, they say, and as we've had a good deal of it to-day, there is most likely some more of it for the night. Hark! they're knocking again—and it's past ten o'clock. Go thou first, Gideon, and I'll light thee."

So saying, she pushed the apprentice forward until they came to the door of the family apartment, and there she found Bryan Fitzosbert just coming out to see what was the matter. With this reinforcement she proceeded with more courage to the door, and undid with trembling hands the bolts, bars, and chains with which it was secured against midnight robbers, who at that time were much more plentiful in London than they have ever been since. In answer to her repeated inquiries of "Who's there?" she thought she could once hear the words, in a soft voice, "It is I,—be quick!" but she was not sure, and neither Bryan nor the apprentice had distinguished them. At length the last fastening was withdrawn; the door was opened, and Friedolinda, pale, haggard, almost breathless, and scarcely able to support herself, staggered into the passage. Bertha, who thought it was a ghost, set up a scream so horrible, that Jordan and Marian ran out in great alarm to see what was the matter, and Marian was just in time to catch her sister in her arms and prevent her from falling. Bryan shut the door, which Bertha still held wide open, and Jordan feeling her hands and kissing her cheek to ascertain that she was indeed his child, and alive, bore her from the feeble arms of Marian into the apartment, and wept hot tears of joy and gratitude upon her beautiful pale face. The warmth of the fire and a cup of wine which they administered to her at Bryan's request, soon revived her; and recognising successively her father, Marian, and Bryan, she also wept and sobbed for joy, which she had not

done for sorrow, in all the sore trials she had undergone. Her first inquiry was after the child that had accompanied her, but none of them had seen any child. Bryan, at her request, went to the door, and there found the poor boy of St. Mary's crouched against the wall. He was led in, and seemed terrified at the strangeness of the scene around him, and looked with distrust and apprehension upon every face, save Friedolinda's, and after a minute or two, Marian's. Friedolinda then narrated her sufferings during the siege, and her almost miraculous escape, receiving at every sentence the caresses and congratulations of her sister. Even the boy came in for his share of Marian's tenderness, and received a kiss from her ripe red lips, which Bryan envied him. Friedolinda concluded her story by relating how the child had crept from their hiding-place, amid a thick fog that covered the river and the shore, and succeeded in untying a small boat from the neighbouring harbour of Dowgate, which he had floated down the tide to the spot where they awaited him; that Longbeard, faint for want of nourishment, and exhausted by the heavy trials he had undergone, had nevertheless rowed the boat to the landing-place at the bridge, and was now waiting in the mid-stream until she returned with such assistance as she could procure, and such provisions as would revive them, and enable them to be many miles down towards the sea before day-break. There was no time to be lost—every minute was precious, and Bryan, unwilling to trust to anybody in an occasion of this emergency, went forth himself to the hostelry in Thames-street, where his foresters lodged. He found they had not yet retired to rest, and having commanded strict secrecy to half-a-dozen of those whom alone he judged it advisable to let into his confidence, he hired a small sailing-boat from the host to be got ready on the instant, and well stored with provisions, and directing that it should await him at the same place, he returned to Friedolinda.

There was a renewal of tears as Friedolinda took leave of Marian; but the tanner was more composed. He saw the strength of her love for Longbeard, and though he could have wished to have kept her to his own heart for ever, he did not utter one word to change the resolution she had taken, of sharing to the last the fortunes of her lover. Bryan borrowed some of the tanner's vestments—his coarse but comfortable cloak, and his burgher's cap—as a disguise for his brother. Friedolinda again took an affectionate farewell of her father and Marian, and was obliged at last, by an effort which cost her heart much agony, to tear herself away from the sister, who hung upon her neck like an infant upon its mother's. It

is useless to dilate upon the tender words of farewell—the promises, the hopes, and the fears, that were expressed ; but hope became at last the strongest ; and when Bryan took Friedolinda by one arm, and the wondering boy by the hand, and led them both over the bridge to Thames-street, where their little bark awaited them, both father and daughter prayed fervently for their good fortune, and looked forward to a speedy meeting in happier times.

They found Longbeard alone in the wherry in the mid-stream, at the place agreed upon, anxiously awaiting their arrival, but half dead with fatigue and privation. The sight of his brother, with Friedolinda and the boy, sufficed to revive him ; and when he saw the tight little cutter, and the six stout fellows that were to man her, all his former courage returned, and he stepped into the boat a new man. It was dangerous to stand upon niceties, and row back the wherry to the harbour at Dowgate, where the boy had cut it adrift ; so they tied it, with some difficulty, to one of the piers of the bridge, that its owner might easily recover it in the morning ; and, unfurling their sails to catch the slight breeze, dropped noiselessly down the river, until they were past the Tower. They then pulled with the oars, and by sunrise the next morning were far away beyond pursuit, below Gravesend, breasting the billows of the mingling river and sea.

William Fitzosbert stepped out of the boat that evening on the Kentish shore. They made their way, without incident, to the forests of Blean, where they remained concealed for three days. At the end of that time they were joined by the tanner and Marian, and learned all that had taken place in London since their departure. Some faint return of his old ambition stirred Fitzosbert's heart as he listened to the recital, but a look from Friedolinda banished the thought for ever. He learned that the people, smitten with sorrow for his supposed fate, and with remorse for their desertion of him, had assembled on the following morning, in tumultuous crowds, and cut down the bodies of the unhappy men who had been hanged in chains at the Elms in Smithfield. That they had then proceeded to the ruins of Bow Church, and discovered the mangled body of Nicholas Bamme, which they had carried through the streets in triumph, and buried with great pomp, a convoy of at least ten thousand persons following it to the grave. They had also found the heavy battle-axe of Longbeard, which they had cut up into a thousand pieces, and carried away as holy relics of a saint and martyr. His black mantle, or the half-burnt remains of it, had shared the same fate ; and women had even dug up the ground where it was known that

carried away the mould as a

holy thing and sacred memento of their idol. It was even believed by some that Longbeard and Friedolinda had both ascended alive to heaven; and one or two even went so far as to assert that they had actually seen them walking about unhurt in the fiercest of the flames. Nothing was to be heard of in the city but the praises of Longbeard, and every day large crowds had assembled at Paul's Cross and listened with delight to long orations upon his virtues and his bravery. Even Jordan and Marian came in for a share of their love; and the bridge, opposite their house, had been daily blocked up by the crowds who cheered the tanner whenever he made his appearance, till the evil became at last too great to be endured, and he had quitted London to avoid them, and lived at his workshops in Bermondsey. But even there they followed him, rending the air with their shouts as he passed; till at last he feared he should become obnoxious to the government in consequence, and hastily took his departure with his daughter, as much to avoid this inconvenient enthusiasm, as to rejoin Friedolinda. Longbeard's heart beat high with ambition as he heard these things, but he conquered the rising passion. The promise made to Friedolinda in the hour of sorrow he resolved to keep, for he knew, and felt in his innermost soul, that her deep devotion well merited all his love and all his care. He did not, however, deem it prudent to remain in England, but with the wreck of his own fortune, and the handsome dowry that the tanner gave him with his daughter, he set sail for Antwerp, where he was again married, with all the rites of the church, to Friedolinda. He forsook the study of politics for ever, and devoting himself to commerce, became one of the richest men in that rich capital. His Friedolinda was long spared to bless and to cheer his home; and whenever any shadow of a cloud threatened to pass over their felicity—and in what married home is there not a shade sometimes?—either had only to hint the sufferings they had undergone in Bow Church, and all was bright again. The family of Fitzosbert became rich and celebrated, and many of them filled the highest municipal offices in the city of Antwerp.

They took the poor boy of St. Mary's to their new country, where the kind treatment that he invariably received, contributed not a little to restore him to a saner state of mind. He never wholly recovered his reason, but was always wild and wandering in his speech, but never so much so as to be distressing to those who heard him. His love of music never forsook him, and he daily became more proficient in the art; and if at any time he might have been considered perfectly sane, it was when performing upon the organ some solemn

piece of sacred harmony, such as those he had been accustomed to in St. Mary's. His fine voice was the delight of all who heard it; and the only drawback was, that he could never exert it in the hours of festivity. He tried to modulate it to sprightly airs; but all in vain,—the short notes were invariably lengthened, and the light song of love became in his mouth a hymn of devotion. His kind friends seeing this, never asked him to exert himself in those hours, but allowed him to sing when he pleased the solemn airs that suited him. Fitzosbert never heard him without a feeling of renewed tenderness to Friedolinda; for he remembered the first plighting of their vows in the solitary church, and that the same voice was heard in the midst of it.

Bryan and Marian did not, as the serving wench, Bertha, had predicted, postpone their union for a twelvemonth; but in much less than twelve weeks the ceremony was performed in the cathedral of Rochester. Bryan afterwards became a steadier man; matrimony sobered him, and he did not deem it at all advisable to infringe too openly the forest laws.

He became careful for his wife's sake, when he would not have been so for his own; and though he never lost his love of the wild woods and his passion for the chase, he indulged it in such a manner as to break no laws, even though he may have considered those laws both unjust and oppressive.

Jordan the tanner felt himself very lonely in London without his daughter; and though he all his life protested that London was the finest place in the world, he soon made up his mind to leave it and settle in Rochester, where he might be near his darling Marian, and have the nursing of the little grandchildren that every year sprung up around him. The tanner continued his trade to the last, and when he died, left so great a fortune to Marian, that Bryan was enabled to purchase an estate, and live the life that exactly suited his inclinations. He was the most popular man in the county; and, dropping his name of Brownbuskin, was more affectionately known by his countrymen as Bryan the Saxon. His hospitality was the theme of praise for miles around, and his annual festivals, when he gave prizes to the best shooters with the cross-bow, were attended by hundreds of competitors and thousands of spectators.

The other personages in our story that require mention, may be dismissed in a few words. If the reader have any interest at all in the fate of the gleeman, he may read on, and learn that the stout old man continued to tramp the country till he reached the patriarchal age of fourscore-and-ten, and that he walked twenty miles, with his cyther upon his shoulder, two days before he died; that he was always a

welcome guest wherever he went; and that his voice remained sonorous and clear long after he had passed his eightieth year. When asked by younger men to explain how he preserved his health and strength to so late a period of life, he gave them willingly his three great specifics, "all of which," he said, "were so valuable, that he did not know upon which of them to set the highest price—the first was temperance; the second, exercise; and the third, contentment." And John-o'-the-Dingle did honour to his rules to the very last; lived through the reigns of Richard and John, and five or six years into that of Henry the Third, and died universally regretted by all the yeomen of the county of Kent, every village in which he successively visited at its proper time, to make music and sing at christenings, birth-days, or weddings, or wherever else his presence might be acceptable, in the long or the short evenings.

Another personage to whom the reader must bid farewell, is Robert de Robaulx. He left the party of Longbeard and his friends at a cross-road, branching off towards Gravesend and Greenhithe, and it was thought by Bryan, and by Marian too, who knew all about the pretty Phebe, and rejoiced that he had found some one to return his love, that he went straight to the house of Roger Tyke. However that may be, the brewer became his father-in-law in less than three months after that day. De Robaulx himself became a brewer too, and in the course of time made the best ale in Kent. His wife bore him at least a dozen children, all of whom survived, and father and mother grew corpulent together, and were considered the best natured and most hospitable people, for their sphere, in all the county. One guest was always welcome whenever he appeared—and that was John-o'-the-Dingle; and he was often known to spend three months at a time at the brewer's house, playing with the children, singing songs to them, and making friends with everybody. The brewer always gave him up the warmest seat at the fire—the best bed in the house, and the strongest ale that he brewed.

Some curious and inquisitive people remarked, that De Robaulx had always more venison to eat and to give away than he could come by, if he honestly paid for it; but his friends, if this was ever hinted at in their presence, always said that exchange was no robbery. "Some persons," said they, "have plenty of venison—more than they know what to do with, but have no ale to wash it down with. De Robaulx has ale in abundance, but no venison. Surely there is no harm in a fair barter?" Notwithstanding this argument, and others like it, those who thought themselves very knowing, shook their heads incredulously, and said, "that

people had had their ears cut off, their eyes bored out, and even lost their heads, for meddling with the king's and with noble-men's deer, but they hoped such would never be the fate of the brewer of Greenhithe." The good people had their wish. No accident of the kind ever happened. De Robaulx brought up all his children in respectability; set his sons up in the world, gave his daughters decent portions, and died with the character of a very worthy, good sort of man.

Abra Ben Acadabra periodically visited that part of the country, to sell his specifics and tell fortunes. In fact, he became not a little proud of his proficiency in the latter department of his vocation. He never learned the actual fate of Friedolinda, whose untimely death he often affected to deplore; and he always ended by reminding Marian that he had predicted it. Marian smiled, but said nothing, and never attempted to put his skill to the test.

It was the opinion of the mayor of London, that Longbeard perished in the flames of St. Mary-le-Bow; and as after the few first days succeeding his death, he was not troubled by the mention of his name, he gave himself no further concern. Richard the First, on his return to London, discovered that Longbeard had been stanch and loyal when treason was rife; and sometimes when he thought upon his fate, was sorry that he had done him wrong. But this was not often; it was after all but the loss of a life—for on the men who suffered at Smithfield he never bestowed a thought at all—and one life to a victorious monarch, who could number his victims by thousands, was a matter of very small consequence.

Alderman Childe never gained the great object of his ambition, which was to become mayor of London, but lived and died an alderman. Fitzalwyne retained that office year after year, until his death, being kept in it by the favour of the king; and is the only man whom the citizens of London ever allowed to retain this honour for so long a period as twenty successive years. His portrait was long preserved with great care by the Draper's Company, of which he was a freeman, and is said still to adorn their hall of meeting.

The lord high justiciary of England made himself many enemies by his mal-administration; and one of the charges brought against him, and which was instrumental in hastening his fall, was his violation of sanctuary, in the case of William Longbeard.

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